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Theme:

BASES OF HINDU THEISM

P. SANKARANARAYANAN

R. G. PANIKKAR

S. MOOKERJEE

S. B. DASGUPTA

M. YAMUNACHARYA

K. S. MURTY

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Editors
P. D. DEVANANDAN & M. M. THOMAS

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EDITORIAL

THIS number of *Religion and Society* consists of papers which have been written for us as preparatory material for the C.I.S.R.S. Seminar on the Hindu View of Man. The Seminar meets in Nagpur, October 10 to 13, 1960. We have been encouraged by the generous response from the Hindu scholars to our invitation to participate in this study. We appreciate their willingness to help us, who are no less eager to learn from them, to elucidate the profundities of Hindu classical thought and to enlighten us on the more recent developments in contemporary interpretation of Hindu fundamentals. At the Seminar itself, in addition to these preliminary papers, we expect discussion to centre on four main issues: the Concept of Personality, Man as an Ethical Individual, Man in Society, and the Origin and Destiny of Man. Discussion at the Seminar will be based on two papers read each day on these topics, one by a Hindu scholar dealing with it from the Hindu point of view, and the other by a Christian presenting the Christian understanding of it. By this means we hope a "conversation" will emerge which will make it possible for us to gain a real insight, in as far as that is possible, into each other's approach to and apprehension of the truths about which we may find agreement and the truths where we would find ourselves in disagreement.

In order to make it possible for a wider circle of Christian participants also to share in this experience, we propose to bring out in the following number of *Religion and Society* the papers which will be read at the Conference as well as the other preparatory papers. It is also hoped that the highlights of the discussion may be relayed to our readers in the form of "impressions" rather than as "findings". Besides, the National Christian Council of India is sponsoring a Conference at the close of the year in Gurukul, Madras, which will attempt a follow-up study of the trends of discussion initiated at this Seminar. The Madras Conference is to be organized by Dr. P. David, Principal, Gurukul Theological College, Kilpauk, Madras-10, and it will meet December 27, 1960 to January 1, 1961. Arrangements are well already under way for it.

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It was after much consideration we decided to describe the general theme of this number as *the Bases of Hindu Theism*. We are not too happy about this general title for the varied collection of scholarly articles which appear in this issue. The lucid exposition of Hindu Theism serves as an excellent introduction to the subject however. To Christian readers it will initiate a train of thought which will largely centre round the central concepts of Man, God, and Reality. It seems increasingly clear that the future of religious understanding in a world which is becoming at the same time conscious of the inevitability of a one-world neighbourhood and the no less imperative need for conserving the diversity of cultural heritages, that creative interchange of thought should more and more dwell on further clarification of these concepts, not only as separable entities but also as interrelated in systems of religious doctrine.

The tendency in all such discussion has been so far to place overmuch stress on the value of the traditional insights of past heritage. We do not suggest that no account should be taken of Scriptural teaching. But we would like to draw attention to the fact that one of the dangers of such narrowly historical approach to religious doctrines is to forget that the mere sum of previous stages of thought does not exhaust the truth of what is being studied. We tend to forget, especially in religious investigation, that the record of past thought is the record also of many imperfect stages in the grasp of a reality which lies beyond our perfect definition. The doctrine of man, for instance, cannot be completely stated, not only because of the new data to be contributed by generations yet to come and by conversation with those of other ways of religious thought, but because the truth we strive to seize has its consummation in the yet-to-be realized purpose of creation as well as its cradle in the amœba.

Though finality of statement and complete agreement about it may not be realized, we ought to be guided as much by the imperatives of service to present need as fidelity to the truth of the past. Talking for the Christian, a survey of the history of the Christian understanding of man would indicate that the search has centred round three closely interrelated topics, namely, *personality*, *sin* and *forgiveness*. In regard to each, Christian doctrine is historically committed to a definite position. Human personality is a spiritual fact, incapable of any naturalistic interpretation or limitation. The sin of man springs ultimately from the freedom which is an essential element in spiritual personality. Forgiveness of sin is the gift of God, and for it man must depend on God. To these three principal affirmations a fourth needs to be added in our day, in view of the new knowledge we have gained

about the dynamics of the social relationships of man. Indeed, they form the conditioning environment for the other three, and their significance have to be reassessed in consequence. This is the challenge to religious faith everywhere of the dominating rôle which human intelligence and rationality have come to play in twentieth-century world-life. Within our own life-span we can see how vastly it is changed—and how radically it is changing still! The apparently endless extension of scientific knowledge and technology is continually altering not only the picture of our world, but also of ourselves. One wonders whether much can be achieved by mere exegesis of traditional scriptural affirmations alone, if we are not willing at the same time to take account of the fresh illuminations of contemporary science and the new enlightenment of present-day thought when they are brought to bear on the insights of traditional heritage. And we believe that this applies pointedly to two concepts of present-day significance, namely 'personality' and 'community'.

* * * * * *

From the repeated references in different contexts in the papers contained in this issue, it is obvious that those who believe that the greatest values are the ones which are realized only in the life of persons —goodness and truth, and possibly beauty as well—will demand, if they make the demand at all, a God Who is also personally conceived, if they are to feel that He is worthy of their reverence and worship. The theist holds not simply that man is to be regarded as a person, but that as a person he is of infinite worth, that each person matters supremely to God, and therefore ought to matter to other persons as well.

Many theists who hold this point of view are puzzled by the inadequacy of the Hindu attitude to man, because of its hesitancy to acknowledge that man is primarily a person. Its insistence on the essential identity of man and God leaves the impression that it is content to regard man only as an aspect of Ultimate Reality. On the other hand, although the Atman-Brahman equation obscures the fact of man's individuality, it may be rightly claimed that it draws attention to the complex character and almost contradictory nature of the "higher" and the "lower" in man, his potentialities as well as his limitations. As against this the history of Christian thought about man would indicate that it has generally been dominated by a belief in the essential depravity of human nature. The Biblical understanding of man as made in the Divine image has been repeatedly laid in question in Christian history by the teaching about the Fall, and the New Testament emphasis on the fact of Man's restoration through the Divine

act of forgiveness has often been displaced in Christian preaching by the reiterated insistence that man is in need of forgiveness because he is still in rebellion against God. The Christian view of man as a *forgiven* sinner rests, however, on the belief that the 'reconciliation' between man and God is the result of a restoration of a *personal* relationship.

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From the theistic point of view, again, the Self is not primarily a 'knower' but an 'agent'. And the centre of the one action, to the Christian, is the redemptive act of God in the person and work of Jesus Christ. What was done in Him, we believe, was done for all mankind, and for the whole life of man. So that, to Christian faith, the healing power of the reconciliation wrought in Jesus Christ has to find expression at the many different levels of human life, and in all patterns of community-being. However, it must be at the same time admitted that, by and large, the prevailing impression persists among Christians themselves that commitment to the Christian faith is largely a matter of subscribing to a body of *intellectual* beliefs. On the contrary, it stands rather for actively belonging in a community of faith which is dedicated to an adventurous and creative way of living.

As Doctor J. H. Oldham puts it arrestingly in a recent article in the *International Review of Missions* (July 1960): "When things are viewed from this standpoint there seem to be inexhaustible springs of renewal and inspiration in Dr. Tillich's formulation of the central Christian affirmation as the appearance in the world of New Being in Jesus Christ. Here is the ultimate source, whether it is recognized or not, of the healing and salvation of which the world is desperately in need. But the assertion that New Being has entered into the world is no more than empty words unless it is made manifest in lives and in creative action."

HINDU THEISM

By Prof. P. Sankaranarayanan

I am grateful to the Reverend Editor of this Bulletin for his kind invitation to write on the subject of Hindu Theism in its religious approach to God as the object of worship. I do hope that this article will go some way to help my Christian friends to *understand* the Hindu point of view and the Hindu way of worship of God, even though they may not be able to *appreciate* it for very good reasons of their own. Due to limitations that I imposed on myself, what follows is a very brief exposition of the subject.

Religion is an attempt to apprehend the true nature of human life and to attain its ideal possibilities. It is the expression of the endeavour to emancipate man from the ephemeral and make him enter into the eternal. It is at once an attitude, an activity and an attainment. It is both a process and a product, a becoming and a being. It is given to man alone to be religious, for only he possesses self-consciousness and the instinct for the Infinite, the yearning for the eternal. The urge to religion is based on a perceived inadequacy of the finite life, the suggestions of the spiritual, the intimations of immortality that it conveys, and on the capacity to strive for and attain the eternal. There is no stone-wall between man and God. Everyone *could* attain Him if only he *would*. The purpose of religion is to convert this recognition of the divine destiny of man into realization.

The predicament of religion is based on Deity-devotee duality. Starting from a felt division between the two and impelled by the desire to annul that division, it is marked by a *relation* which brings the Deity and the devotee nearer to each other till at last the devotee is divinised and loses his separateness. With the extinction of this sense of separateness, the office of religion is terminated. For religion signifies the process of binding man again to his God from whom he has been sundered. When the *bond* is once established, the *binding* as a *process* is necessary no longer. The fulfilment of religion is its negation.

This *relation* between the Deity and the devotee is characterised by *devotion* which places the devotee in tune with God, in an accordant attitude and activity. This *attunement* to God is what is known as *worship*, by which the devotee creates for himself a climate of religion, in which his whole mind, his entire speech and his every act are oriented

to the object of worship. This relation between man and God implies, by virtue of its being a relation, a two-way traffic. As man ascends to God with his effort, God descends to man with His grace. As man walks towards God, God runs towards him. So plentiful is God's grace and so ready is it to flow that it discharges itself in abundance even through a tiny outlet of man's endeavour, provided it is genuine. This outlet (it may be a leaf, a flower or a fruit piously offered) is caused by worship, the one purpose of which is to bridge the gulf between man and God. Even a little effort of man opens the floodgates of God's grace so that religious progress is characterised by the twin aspects of ascent of man and the descent of God. God, in a manner of speaking, humanises Himself to help man to divinise himself. In the process God loses nothing of His divinity, but through this same process man loses the finitude that characterises his humanity. The descent of God into the realm of man is known as an incarnation or an *avatar*. God comes down into the world, the Infinite assumes finite lineaments to establish fellowship with man, to extend Its hand which man may clasp in his sphere and rise to divine heights. The abstract Infinite becomes the concrete God who would speak and would be spoken to, who can be the object of mental vision as of physical perception, with whom man can enter into diverse kinds of relations according to his needs and his capacities. To such a God man turns for comfort in his distress, for counsel in his confusions, for solace in his afflictions, and to lay his heart bare with its follies and its frailties. In a context of felt inadequacies of life in respect of strength and power, of knowledge and wisdom, of goodness and perfection, anxious to free himself from the shackles of empirical life, man seeks a Power greater than his own, which he invokes by the varieties of forms compendiously called worship.

Worship is cardinal to religion. By it one enters into personal and intimate relation with God. In the nature of the case, there cannot be any duplicity or make-believe in worship. A man worships God, if he truly does so, 'with all his mind, with all his heart and with all his soul'. The whole being of the worshipper is fully and truly oriented to God till God so suffuses him that he loses consciousness of himself. The worshipper becomes less and less self-conscious and more and more God-conscious, and in the fullness of the latter, the act of worship which is sustained by the distinction between the worshipper and the Worshipped lapses into inactive contemplation.

Religious worship carries with it certain implications which deserve to be remembered. In the first place, it involves the concept of a personal God as distinct from that of a metaphysical Absolute. The God of religion is looked upon as the Creator and Protector and as one who vouchsafes salvation. He is the ground of our being and the goal of

our becoming. He is at once our source and our sanctuary. Lofty as the Supreme Being, He is not yet so far away as to be inaccessible to the devotee. He is both eminent and immanent. In the second place, worship requires certain moral qualifications in the worshipper. It is only a pure and loving heart with a sense for the good that can engage in worship of God. And, in the process of worship, the moral excellences of the worshipper get deepened in such measures that to be religious is synonymous with being good. Thirdly, as an act, worship involves an attunement of the mind alike to the worship and to the object worshipped, through the forms of ritual which effect concentration and prevent distraction. And finally, the God of worship has to be constantly before the worshipper whom he sees most intensely with his mind's eye or whom he thinks of as personified in some aid that he adopts for his concentration in an image or a picture that he places before himself or in a *mantra* that he utters. It is by these means that man draws himself to God and puts himself *en rapport* with Him.

I believe that, by and large, the foregoing details the fundamentals of any theistic religion in its aspect of worship of God. Hindu theism is generally of the same pattern *plus* certain distinctive features which are peculiarly its own. From the point of view of the nature of God Himself, it is a common criticism that Hinduism is a religion of Nature-worship and that, in it, the forces of Nature are given a divine status, that it is polytheistic and that it comprehends within itself a baffling hierarchy of gods who are as varied as they are numerous. In reply it may be said at once that the Vedic *rishis* did not worship the elements and objects of Nature as gods; but they saw God as the elements and the objects. They saw the one and only God diversely manifested in these objects. As Sri Krishna declared in the *Bhagavad Gīta*, "Whatever excellent thing there is in the universe, know that it is an expression of Me". So, when they worshipped *Agni* or *Varunā* or *Vāyu*, the *rishis* did not worship the elements as such, but the Supreme Being manifested in and through them. They did not worship many gods, but the one God in many forms and by many names. A particular manifestation is dearer to an individual more than any other and he goes into ecstasies of prayer and song over it. In accordance with what is known as *nahinindānyāya* which means that to extol one is not to decry another that manifestation is acclaimed as the highest. The three manifestations of Divinity as Brahma, Vishnu and Śiva are only three forms of the Supreme in Its aspects of creator, protector and destroyer. The ultimate Reality is defined as that from which the entire universe is born, that by which it lives and that into which it lapses at the end. Brahma, Vishnu and Śiva express this triune nature of the Supreme and in essence they are not three, but one appearing as three. Thus

when the Hindu worships any of them, he is really worshipping the same God though for purposes of contemplation, of praise and prayer, he thinks of them as different.

The Hindu's God answers to the concept of immanence more than of transcendence. The whole universe is permeated by God. The high watermark of religion is mystic experience. In that state, the devotee sees God as everything and everything as God. He also sees God in everything and everything in God. After describing Himself in terms of every created thing in the world in the tenth chapter of the *Gīta*, the Lord shows His *viśwarūpa* to Arjuna who, helped by the *divya chakṣus*, the divine eye that the Lord vouchsafed to him, sees every created thing constituting the body of the Supreme. For the purpose of worship, God's presence may be prayerfully invoked in any substance, in any image, in a stone without a specific form, in a tree, in a pot of water or in a geometrical design known as a *yantra*. It is the Hindu's belief that these objects that he worships are intensely impregnated with divinity either by their very nature, as in the case of a *śaligrāma* stone or *aśwattha* tree, or made so by the transference to them, by the incantations of appropriate *mantras*, of the spirituality which saintly persons have acquired by the immensity of their *tapas*. And, by the most convincing of all tests, the pragmatic, many an earnest devotee has been thrilled to ecstasies of devotion while adoring his God through these objects and has found by this process, the satisfaction of his material and spiritual longings.

The Supreme is not merely Truth and Goodness, but also Beauty. The intellectual approach to God is not for everyone. The ethical approach requires a discipline of the will which few can practise to perfection. But the æsthetic approach by which God is contemplated as the Beautiful, the *Bhuvanasundara*, gives a joy of incomparable quality and immeasurable intensity, and in this æsthetic contemplation, man spontaneously forgets himself. Feasting his mental or physical eyes on God's entrancing form, he is taken immediately into the sacred sanctum of the Divine, there to be absorbed in Its inclusive personality.

The devotee yearns for the physical vision of God as the Beautiful, and to this end he invokes His presence in the images that he makes, and he delights to dwell on the bow and the brow of a Rāmachandra or the flute, the flower and the feather that adorn a Bālakrishna. When he worships the stone or the metal image or picture of God, he does not think of these particular material objects. He sees them not as stone or image or picture, but as God Himself and proffers his worship and supplication to that God. Thus it is not *image worship* that he performs, but worship of God in the image. And he makes images of

God according to his own conceptions. The images may have a diversity of aspects from the most pleasing to the most terrible. When the devotee worships even the most terrible aspect of Divinity as Narasimha or Kāli, he sees his God as the destroyer of evil before which He assumes the terrible form. Thus a Kāli worshipper who is good and pious has no need to be afraid of that manifestation. In fact, Narasimha was death to the demon Hiranyakaśipu, but looked lovingly at Prahlāda, the pattern of piety. Kāli, who is terrible to behold, was the sweet and caressing mother to Sri Rāmakrishna. God is terrible when he performs *dushtanigraha*, the liquidation of Evil, but *saumya* or pleasing when He is engaged in *sādhuparitrāṇa*, the protection of the Good. In reality, there is nothing terrible about God; it is an aspect which He *assumes* for a particular purpose.

The conception of God as the Mother is a distinctive contribution of Hindu theism in the realm of religion. In human relations, generally speaking, the children are dearer to the mother than to the father, and the mother is nearer to them than is the father. To think of God as the Mother facilitates the establishing of the climate of love to God, which is called *bhakti*; it makes such devotion spontaneous, and therefore easy and effortless. Divinity is compacted both of Law and Love, of just deserts and mercy, of *daṇḍa* and *daya*. God as the Mother is the embodiment of the element of grace and forgiveness in Divinity which the erring mortal most abundantly needs for his own redemption. Moreover, the Mother aspect of God is the personification of the dynamic principle in the universe, that which invests everything in the world, great or small, with the power to function in its appropriate manner. This power is known as *Śakti*. Every action implies as its precondition knowledge from which it springs and desire which motivates it. Thus *Śakti* is threefold, known as *Jnāna Śakti*, *Icchā Śakti* and *Kriyā Śakti*, and these are personified for the purpose of worship as Saraswati, Lakshmi and Durga. But remembering as the devotee does that they are threefold manifestations of the same *Śakti*, they are not different to him.

The devotee has a mental conception of his God, or he sees Him in the images that he worships or he adores Him as immanent in himself, as the *antaryāmin*, seated in the recesses of his heart, by which is understood not the physiological organ, but the inmost part of himself. He contemplates Him and in the process of such contemplation, he draws himself to Him by uttering His praise or by hearing it, by the ritual of worship, by prostration, by dedicating himself body and soul to Him, by a process of absolute surrender and resignation. Various are the attitudes in which the devotee approaches his God, as His servant, as His son, as His friend, as His bride. The *bhakta*

looks on himself as the bride whose soul is bound in indissoluble marriage to the divine Bridegroom. These attitudes are known as *dāsya, vātsalya, sakhya* and *prema* (or *madhura*) *bhāvas* and stand in an ascending order of intimacy of spiritual relationship between the devotee and the Deity. In the plenal bliss of bridal mysticism, which, in its perfect form and content, is illustrated in the *bhakti* of the Gopies to Krishna, lies the fullness of religious union or *yoga* in which the distinction between the devotee and the Deity vanishes, and the union becomes a unity. When the alone merges in the Alone, the Alone alone remains.

A word may be said of the conception of the Goddess as the 'wife' of God and of that of 'children' of God that one meets within Hindu theism. When Saraswati is spoken of as the wife of Brahma, Lakshmi as the wife of Vishnu, and Pārvati as the wife of Śiva, the idea is not to express a marital relation between them, but to underline the fact that the *Śakti* aspect of these manifestations is inseparable from the divinity with which each of them is associated. When their 'children' are referred to, it is by way of personification of fundamental spiritual excellences and powers emanating from those divinities. Those excellences are contemplated by the devotee by embodying them in forms on which he can concentrate.

According to Hinduism in its philosophical aspect, liberation or *moksha* is attained by a realisation of one's true nature either as non-different from the Absolute Reality according to Advaita Vedānta or as a non-separable part of the Supreme according to Viśishtādvaita. In either school, knowledge or *jnāna* of one's true nature is the essential condition of liberation. In the former it is the final means; in the latter it is the penultimate, the final being *bhakti.* Such knowledge is vouchsafed as an instruction or *upadeśa* by a *guru* and is realised by meditative contemplation by the *sishya.* God is looked upon as the *guru par excellence* and the God-*Guru* equation is one of the noteworthy features of Hindu theism. An apt pupil who approaches his teacher with due humility is required to consider his *guru* as his God and to render to him all the service and adoration that he would render to God. The idea is that it is God Himself who appears as *guru.* And, indeed, twice in Hindu religious history did God appear as *guru* to instruct mankind, once as Krishna who spoke the *Gīta* to Arjuna—this was long ago—and again for all eternity when in His aspect of the cosmic *Guru* who, sitting on Himalayan heights, His eyes southward bent (as Dakshinamurthy), He dispels the darkness in the caves of ignorance by an initiating look which utters the unspoken word. The grace of God as the *guru* is needed for the proper fruition of the instruction that the *śishya* receives and to dower him with the enlightenment that will

free him from the bonds of *samsāra*. That is why Sri Śankara, the high-priest of Advaita Vedānta, according to which God is but the empirical highest, poured out his heart in strains of devotional *stotra* in praise of every conceivable manifestation of the Supreme Being. In passing, reference may be made to a misunderstanding of the place of God in Advaita philosophy. In the fullness of advaitic experience expressed in the dictum, *aham brahmāsmi*, "I am Brahman,' which must really be speechless (for the words of the statement convey a duality-consciousness), there is no awareness of God as an *other* even as there is no experience of oneself as a separate entity or of the world as an object of perception. But in the sphere of empirical life when the Advaitic experience has not yet dawned, the sense of one's own finitude and the need to account for the world of name and form point to the Infinite that is God who, far from being illusory, is most real *in that sphere* in the full sense of that expression, and to whom man addresses his worship.

Why, it may be asked, is there in Hinduism such a vast and varied galaxy of forms in which God is worshipped, of diverse hues and shapes, from *Māriamman* to *Mahāvishnu*? This question has been partly answered earlier. It may be added that Hinduism holds that, in the sphere of religion, as in that of education, there is *adhikāribheda*, the difference of attitudes and capacities, and each person conceives of God as he most likes to do or as he possibly can. Each worships God in his way as he conceives Him in a manner appropriate to his faculties; God takes from each man according to his capacity and dowers him according to his needs. What is Real is One. It is not only spoken of by the wise variously; it is also worshipped by the not-so-wise in equally various ways. And God has declared that howsoever men worship Him, He accepts their worship. For, all are His devotees, not only those who belong to the Vedic religion generally called Hinduism, but those of every religion in vogue in the world at any time and among any people; for, He is the God of all religions.

THE *BRAHMAN* OF THE *UPANIṢADS* AND THE GOD OF THE PHILOSOPHERS[1]

By Dr. R. G. Panikkar

The question of the personal character of the Absolute seems to be a stumbling block in the dialogue between Hinduism and Christianity that bars from the very beginning any further understanding. We shall not deal here directly with this fundamental issue, but we would like to interpolate this essay in terminology which may throw some preliminary light on the subject, eventually eliminating unnecessary misunderstandings. To modern Hinduism *Brahman* is not a Person, and, in consequence, is therefore not looked upon as a personal God, but as the Absolute, and thus identified with God only in the trans-personal sense of Godhead. Yet, any student of Indian Philosophy knows that this identification is far from being classical in Hinduism.[2] We shall have, therefore, first to explain briefly the rôle and place of *Brahman* in Indian thought, and secondly to qualify the possible identification between God and *Brahman* in agreement with modern scholars,[3] though not, perhaps, in the same sense.[4]

To begin with the Indian search for *Brahman* was the quest for a world-ground. That is why *Brahman* was successively called—rather than identified with—breath,[5] primal matter,[6] food,[7] etc. From these it was easy to mean the All,[8] the ideal intemporal structure of the world,[9]

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[1] *Cf.* the paper submitted to the XX Session of the *All-India Oriental Conference* Bhuvaneswar, 24-10-1959 on the same subject.

[2] *Cf.* The *Puruṣa* texts of the *Vedas* for instance (*Ṛg. Ved.*, X, 80, 2, among others).

[3] *Cf.* The *Outline* by R. E. Hume and the *Introduction* by S. Radhakrishnan to their masterly translations of the *Upaniṣads*, London, 1921 (2nd ed., 1931 revised—reprinted 1951) and London, 1953, respectively.

[4] Cf. *etiam* B. Heimann, *Studien zur Eigenart des indischen Denkens*, Tübingen (J. C. B. Mohr-P. Siebeck), 1930, always useful.

[5] Cf. *Kausītakī Up.*, III, 2; *Bṛhad. Up.*, III, 9, 9; VI, 1, 13 (*Chānd. Up.*, V, 1, 13); etc.

[6] *Cf.* R. C. Zaehner, *At Sundry Times*, London, 1956, pp. 59 sq.

[7] Cf. *Taitt. Up.*, II, 2; III, 7–9; III, 10, 6; *Maitri Up.*, VI, 12–14; *Chāndog. Up.*, VII, 9, 2; etc.

[8] *Chānd. Up.*, VI, 12, 3; *Bṛhad. Up.*, 1, 4, 10; *Praśna Up.*, VI, 10–11, etc.

[9] *Gītā*, II, 17; etc.; *Chānd. Up.*, VI, 12.

the formless ground of being,[10] the Real,[11] the knowledge of the Real,[12] the Imperishable,[13] the One,[14] the mere condition for the emergence of time and space,[15] etc.

An analysis of the problem would show us that the underlying goal of the search was the absolute being, and because being implies the problem of beings, *Brahman* could be equally identified with non-being,[16] or simply in one word *Brahman* stands for the Absolute.[17]

Now two main problems arise. The one is the relationship of *Brahman* with *Ātman*. We know that at least *Advaita Vedānta*, presenting itself as the crown of Indian Wisdom, will identify both, and will claim that this is also the teaching of the *Upaniṣads*.[18] We shall not enter into this discussion, the dynamics and tension of which constitute at least the core of the whole Vedāntic system if not of the whole of Indian Philosophy.[19]

Yet this is not the only creative tension of Indian thought. The second problem, though more discreet in its discussion, is not less important and full of vital consequences. It is the question of the relationship between this *Brahman* and God. Both stand for the same reality and yet they are very distinct from each other. *Brahman* stands at the end of a philosophical-theological speculation, it stands at the limit of the intellect, just beyond it.[20] God, on the other hand, stands at the end, at the goal of human worship. The gods are ultimately one, because our will does not stop short of the absolute Oneness. But the God of worship cannot be an abstract and common ground of being, a mere condition of existence. It must be a person, an "X" in some way or other.

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[10] *Chānd. Up.*, III, 14, 3–4; XI, 38.

[11] *Bṛhad. Up.*, II, 5, 19; *Śvetās. Up.*, IV, 10; *Chānd. Up.*, VI, 1, 2–7.

[12] *Śvetās. Up.*, I, 10.

[13] *Muṇd. Up.*, II, 1, 2; *Śvetās Up.*, V, 1; *Bṛhad. Up.*, III, 7, 3, etc.

[14] *Māndūk. Up.*, 7; *Bṛhad. Up.*, III, 9, 1–10.

[15] *Śvetās Up.*, VI, 5 sq.

[16] *Chānd. Up.*, VI, 2, 1; *Taitt. Up.*, II, 7.

[17] Our references are not exhaustive, but only meant as a mere introduction into the problem.

[18] Cf. *Chānd. Up.*, V, 11, 1; *ibid.*, VII, 25, 2; *ibid.*, VIII, 14, 1; *Bṛhad. Up.*, III, 4, 1; *ibid.*, IV, 4, 25; *Aitar. Up.*, V, 3; *Śvetās, Up.*, I, 16; *Muṇd. Up.*, II, 2, 5; *ibid.*, II, 2, 9; etc.

[19] Cf. *etiam Bṛhad. Up.*, I, 4, 10; II, 5, 19; III, 23; IV, 4, 12; *Chānd. Up.*, VI, 8, 7.

[20] *Cf.* the wonderful description of the *Puruṣa in Muṇd. Up.*, II, 1, 2.

Hence the struggle in Indian Philosophy between *Brahman* as the abstract Absolute and God as the concrete and living Absolute. It is fascinating to follow the ups and downs of such a struggle. When the exuberant Vedic gods discreetly withdrew, both the uniqueness of God and the absoluteness of *Brahman* appeared. After the first reaction of the early *Upaniṣads* against God in favour of *Brahman*, just because they were against the plurality of gods, there is the counter-offensive of the *Kaṭha*, *Muṇḍaka* and *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣads* in favour of a God superior to *Brahman*.[21] God appears then clearly anterior to and different from *Brahman*.[22]

Modern scholarship is still discussing this double problem.[23] It will appear, however, as if something more than pure exegesis is required to throw light on the problem. The parallelism with the question of *Ātman* may help us to centre the issue.

The Indian mind discovers, on the one hand, the *Ātman* as the soul, and on the other, *Brahman* as the world-ground. Each of them are somehow ultimate in their own sphere. Now, these two spheres, the anthropological and the cosmological, are not so distant and disconnected as not to invite a higher synthesis and union. This is reached in Indian Philosophy by the equation *Ātman-Brahman*.

Now if *Brahman* is the discovery of the *jñana-mārga*, and, in a way, *Ātman* is the first postulate of the *karma-mārga*, God under whatever name, yet, somehow as a personal Supreme, is the condition and the end of the *bhakti-mārga*. *Brahman* is the Ultimate, but God would have no meaning if He also were not the Absolute and the Ultimate. Now the nature of both—if we may say so—appears to be very different. The one is abstract, general, all-pervading from below, as it were, common to everything and the presupposition of every being.[24] The other one is concrete, personal, all-embracing but from above, as it were, calling to union, but yet transcendent, the end and goal of every being.

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[21] Cf. *Śvetās. Up.*, I, 8; V, 5 and 6; etc.

[22] Cf. *Muṇḍ. Up.*, III, 1, 3.

[23] *Cf.* S. N. Das Gupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, London, 1951; pp. 42 sq. *et etiam* R. D. Ranade, *A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy*, Poona, 1926.

[24] "It is significant that in the *Vedas* the mythical image of the *Brahman* is the *skambha*, the cosmic pillar, the *axis mundi*, a symbol whose archaism no longer stands in need of proof.....". M. Eliade, *Yoga*, London, 1958, 115. [On *skambha* in the *Atharva Veda* (X, 7, 8). *Cf.* the interesting remarks by E. A. Solomon, Summaries of Papers submitted to the XX Session of the *All-India Oriental Conference*, Bhuvaneswar, 1959, pp. 22–23.]

Indian speculation identifies both even if the characteristics of the two are not compatible. After all the attributes of the Ultimate are only in our mode of knowledge. Yet the same criticisms against a hurried identification between *Brahman* and *Ātman* apply to the identification between *Brahman* and God.

From an *essential point of view* we would rather agree with such criticism. That is to say, in Scholastic terminology: If *Brahman* is the *ens commune*, *i.e.*, the mere essential quiddity of all beings, the universal substructure and the only condition of everything, it cannot be the *ens reale*, or rather *ens realissimum*, *i.e.*, the concrete and living God, the real source of beings and the absolute reality which is not only *in* everything, but also *above* everything.

The problem in itself is worth an independent study. We can now merely touch upon the question. Just one more remark, which we hope to substantiate on another occasion.

Although we should beware of reducing metaphysics to anthropology—and much more to psychology—there is undoubtedly an intimate link between the two. Our ways of thinking, our methods of investigation are not only conditioned by the nature of the object, they are also determined by the anthropological structure of the subject.

It seems to me as if our quest for the Absolute could follow two different anthropological ways. According to the way followed the very object "meant" will be distinct. The *Upaniṣads* are obviously, from a metaphysical point of view, a fantastic achievement of the human mind in its search for the world-ground, for the foundation of the universe, for *idam* of the *this*. But we can look for it in two ways. We can search for the foundation, the ground, the basis, or we can search for the ultimate, the absolute, the summit. In other words, we are anthropologically bound to search for that principle either below, *i.e.*, among the under-structures common to all beings, or above, *i.e.*, as the end and culmination of everything. We are not describing now the two well-known ways of immanence and of transcendence in the search for the Absolute, though there is a certain relation. The ways of immanence or transcendence concern the *object* (we consider the Absolute as an object either within or without), whereas we are speaking here of two methods by which the *subject*, man, can start his search for Being. Let us describe them again a little more closely.

The one way will proceed more or less on these lines: We shall find the foundation of the world if we search for that which all things in the world have in common, that in which they all share. Everything which is, *is*, and *this* "being" *is* everything that is. Every being is

being because it is a part, a manifestation, a transformation of that "being". That "being" is the origin of all, because it is all, is the source of all being because it is all being. All that *is* is nothing but that; some Greeks would say prime matter and a great part of the *Upaniṣads* say *Brahman*. All that *is* really is only that under-structure, for only that is common to all. That is really the *all* and the real ground of everything.[25] Whatever a being may be, it *is* only because it is *that*, *Brahman*, that being which is the ground or substratum of all.[26] The anthropological thirst for unity and the psychological inclination towards immanence may be two important factors in searching for the world-ground as the common basis of every being.[27] There is also a certain feminine trend in this conception of "*Brahman*" as the "matrix" and womb of all that is.

The other way would stress the opposite characters. The anthropological thirst for sublimity and the psychological trend for transcendence are here the dominating factors. What is looked for is rather a principle as otherness and not as identity. A certain masculine feature is also visible in this conception of "God" as Father, as Creator, Producer, active Principle, etc.

This second way involves the search for the ultimate not from below but from above. What all things have in common will be only the most common thing, namely, only an external resemblance which allows us to give the same name to similar things, but in fact, each being is unique and there does not *exist* a thing like a common being, prime matter, in which all things share or even subsist. The world-ground is not only transcendent; it is also source, principle, origin, cause; it is that summit, that otherness which sustains, maintains, produces the rest of beings. If *Brahman* is the One, God is the Other. The return of all things to the Ultimate will not be considered as a dissolution or even destruction of all particularities and individualistic features, as in the former way, but as a culmination, even resurrection, of all that here on earth *is*, because the world-ground is not an *underground identity* that is already there, but an *eminent communion* that has to be reached.

The one way is specially sensitive to identity, to immanence, to unity; the other way will rather be open to diversity, to transcendence, to differences. The Indian mind as a whole, for instance, is almost

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[25] Cf. *Atharva Veda*, X, 8, 2.

[26] In the *Mandala Yantra* just the central point (*bindu*) symbolizes the undifferentiated *Brahman*. *Cf.* M. Eliade, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

[27] *Cf.* The famous comparison of *Gauḍapāda*, *Āgamaśāstra*, III, 3–9 referring to the one space limited by several jars and reverting to the same space once the jars are broken (so it occurs with the *Jīvas* and *Ātman*).

exclusively directed to the underlying identity. The Hebrew mentality would, on the contrary, be characteristically acute for the culminating diversity, for the uniqueness of each being. The former is deep, and from the depths will it try to find the truth; the latter is high and from the heights will it attempt to reach truth. To be blind to differences would be as one-sided as to be blind to identity. To keep the balance between the two ways and to be equally as profound as sublime, equally as deep as high, is one of the functions of mature Philosophy.

In one word, the conception of *Brahman* can hardly be tallied with the conception of God. Both conceptions are almost as opposite as pure potentiality to pure actuality. Even recognising that the Absolute transcends every conception, our ideas about it are not irrelevant so long as we live in this temporal world.

Moreover, if we were to be strict in this essential level, it could hardly be said that any two conceptions of the Ultimate are equal. The Muslim and the Christian conception of God, for instance, being very similar in many points, yet, differ essentially not only because of the Christian idea of God as Trinity, but also of Christ as Son of God. And if we press still further the intellectual differences, we must say that the Thomistic idea of God, for instance, differs from the Scotistic one. The idea of *Brahman* is not the theistic idea of God, nor is the conception of God in Leibniz or Descartes the same, nor in Malebranche and in Suarez, nor in any two thinkers of different metaphysical schools.

Yet, from a vital and *existential point of view* both conceptions, that of *Brahman* and that of God, even if they are not equal and even if one were wrong, point to the same (Being, Reality, Truth, Ultimate, Absolute....). That *Brahman* which is considered as passive, non-acting, sub-structural, etc. and which is recognised to be the cause of this world, may not stand the philosophical analysis or it may, on the contrary, oblige us to revise our conception of God, but it is certainly pointing towards the same Reality which another philosophical tradition calls God.

For this reason we think we are entitled to counterbalance a little the pure essentialistic philosophical divergencies and proceed in our research after the nature and functions of that Ultimate which not without reason—on the other hand—has been called *Brahman* by Indian Tradition.[28] After all only if we are inserted in a living tradi-

[28] We would agree with the remarkable study of Zaehner, *op. cit.*, except perhaps in his belittling interpretation of *Advaita* which he identifies with a monolithic monism. We think that *Advaita Vedānta* in spite of its monistic danger—only too real in many of its representatives—contains a deeper truth which should not be easily dismissed in favour of an unqualified Theism. Christian Trinity is something more than pure Theism. God is there not even *one* Person, and yet is *one* God.

tion—and not from outside—will we be able to contribute to its progress and advancement. This is valid for Hindu as well as for Christian traditions.

Nor is this all. Even from an essential point of view, even from a pure doctrinal view-point, the problem is far from being solved in the exclusive favour of one of the two opposite conceptions. Even within Indian Philosophy itself there is a tension between the two and it would not be accurate to equate *Brahman* only with indiscriminated being.[29]

To begin with, *Brahman* is not only the undetermined, the underground, the unconscious, the immanent; it is also the defined, the supreme, the conscious, the transcendent.[30] The *jñānins* may have discovered *Brahman* and the *bhaktas* God; but now comes the effort, which in a sense is more important than the classical Indian identification between *Ātman* and *Brahman*, and this is the identity discovered between *Brahman* and God. The personal God without the corrective of *Brahman* may well become an anthropomorphic idol; the transpersonal *Brahman* without its complementary vision as God, may well dissolve in a mere abstraction of the *ens commune*. We believe that Indian Wisdom offers here immense possibilities of deepening the conception of the Absolute without falling into the pits into which Indian Philosophy has been the first victim to fall. The famous Pascalian dichotomy between the God of the Philosophers and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is precisely what India tries to bridge and what the *Upaniṣads* themselves strive to overcome. They do not want a God for the pious believers and another world-ground for the philosophers. They are not satisfied with an amorphous *Brahman*; they want also a living *Brahman*, pure consciousness, perfect bliss and supreme being, not as a kind of sum total of total being, but as *that* which, being in all beings, yet does not rest in them.[31]

Has Indian Philosophy realised this synthesis? It is not our concern now to develop this point, but I would dare to say that not even Thomas Aquinas has been completely successful in his strictly philosophical endeavour of realising the union between a transcendent Prime Mover, an Absolute Being unrelated to the world and a living God caring for men, loving the world up to a point of *sending* his eternally

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[29] Only too well known is the dialectic between *Saguna* and *Nirguna* Brahman.

[30] Besides the former references *cf. Taitt. Up.*, II, 6; *Chānd. Up.*, III, 12, 6; *Kaṭha Up.*, V, 10; VI, 13; *Maitri Up.*, VI, 22; *Muṇd. Up.*, II, 2, 8; *Śvetās. Up.*, I, 13; *Bṛhad. Up.*, IV, 4, 20; *Kena Up.*, 11; etc., etc.

[31] *Cf.* the famous passages of the *Gītā*, IX, 4–5 (*cf. etiam*, VII, 12).

begotten Son....His synthesis—summa—was a theological one, and there he almost forgot the *theos* of Aristotle.

Summing up we could say this: *Brahman* and God are *materialiter* the same and *formaliter* different. That is to say, they point to the same absolute reality, but from two different, almost opposite, angles. Obviously the description of the Absolute will fundamentally differ. We cannot equate both notions. Yet if we are aware of the above-described double perspective we shall understand that in spite of the differences, both languages are talking about the same thing. Moreover, because both concepts stand for the Absolute, there is an internal dialectic in both of them pointing towards the complementary aspect, *i.e.*, *Brahman* needs, as it were the concrete aspect—and this is the problem of *Iśvara*[32]—and God is not satisfied in being just the Supreme Lord—and this is the philosophical problem of God, or the God of the philosophers. It may be expected that the deepening enquiry into the nature of the Absolute will be not the less important result of the meeting of philosophies and cultures taking place at the present times.

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[32] *Cf.* My "Iswara and Christ as a Philosophical Problem," in *Religion and Society*, Bangalore (October, 1959).

GOD AND THE ABSOLUTE IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF RADHAKRISHNAN

By Prof. S. Mookerjee

The relation between God and the Absolute has been a problem of immense perplexities in eastern as well as western thought. Many a metaphysical system in the east as also in the west has faced an impasse while trying to grapple with this perplexing problem and has attempted to bridge the gulf between God and the Absolute in various ways.

The Absolute is a metaphysical concept, signifying an ultimate non-relational reality. God is essentially a concept of religious philosophy, signifying a divine personality with whom communion and adjustment is possible for man. This concept of God satisfies some of the most vital spiritual needs of man. If the arid, intellectualistic and non-relational concept of the Absolute is identified with that of God, it robs God of all the warmth of personal relationship with which he is vested in the religious concept. If, on the other hand, the God of religion is kept distinct from the Absolute of metaphysics, how are we to work our way from the concept of the Absolute to that of God? And how are we to reconcile the relegation of God to an inferior order of reality with the demand of religion, which would require Him to be the most supreme being, second to none?

I wish to examine in this paper whether such questions as indicated above have been satisfactorily answered in the philosophy of Radhakrishnan. In him, we have a philosopher who has drunk deep at the fountains of eastern as well as western philosophic thought and acquired a breadth and depth of vision which are the outcome of sympathetic understanding and deep erudition of what is best in the east and in the west. We shall now try to discover the indications in Radhakrishnan's philosophy leading towards the solution of this central but perplexing problem of the philosophy of religion; *viz.*, the relation between God and the Absolute.

In his reply to critics, Radhakrishnan, clarifying his position in respect of the relation between God and the Absolute, states,

> These are not to be regarded as exclusive of each other.... The Supreme has three simultaneous poises of being, the transcendent Absolute, *Brahman*, the creative freedom, *Īśvara*, and the wisdom, power and love manifest in the world, *Hiranya-garbha*.

> These do not succeed each other in time. It is an order of arrangement and logical priority, not of temporal succession.... The tendency to regard *Īśvara* or God as phenomenal and *Brahman* as real is not correct.[1]

From the above statement, it is clear that Radhakrishnan is making an attempt to save both the concepts; *viz.*, the metaphysical concept of the Absolute and the religious concept of God. By suggesting his theory that both God and the Absolute are but the aspects of the 'Supreme', Radhakrishnan hopes to retain the religious attributes of God and yet preserve his metaphysical status of the highest reality. Radhakrishnan protests against the tendency to regard God as phenomenal. We shall now proceed to consider if the above position of Radhakrishnan is logically tenable.

Despite his protest against the tendency towards regarding God as phenomenal, Radhakrishnan, himself shows a marked tendency to put God within the temporal process. This is brought out by his statement, "Life eternal which carries us beyond the limits of temporal growth, may take us to the Absolute but God is essentially bound up with the life of time".[2] Here, evidently, we discover a contradiction of thought on the part of Radhakrishnan, *viz.*, to accept God within the life of time and yet protest against his phenomenality. Any entity which is within the temporal process must be *ipso facto* phenomenal. Radhakrishnan, therefore, has failed to rescue the concept of God from the world of phenomena.

We observe in passing, that both Bradley and Śaṁkara have avoided the contradiction of thought in this respect to which Radhakrishnan has fallen a prey.

In his, *Appearance and Reality*, Bradley has clearly stated, "If you identify the Absolute with God, that is not the God of religion. If again you separate them, God becomes a finite factor in the whole."[3] Further, Bradley clinches the matter in his typical paradoxical way thus: "We may say that God is not God, till he has become all in all, and a God which is all in all is not the God of religion. God is but an aspect, and that must mean an appearance of the Absolute."[4]

In Bradley, God is clearly viewed as phenomenal or an appearance, while the Absolute is given the status of the highest monistic metaphysical reality.

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[1] *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*, p. 797.

[2] Radhakrishnan, *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 338.

[3] Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 395.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 296–97.

In the above respect, Śaṁkara's thought is in very close agreement with that of Bradley, as is brought out by Radhakrishnan's own interpretation of Śaṁkara. "*Brahman* cast through the moulds of logic is Iśvara," says Radhakrishnan, "It is not the highest reality".[5] Then again, "The whole phenomenal world is the appearance of *Brahman*. *Brahman*, on which all rests, become Iśvara, which includes all when shaped by phenomenal forms".[6]

Thus we see that according to Radhakrishnan's own interpretation, Śaṁkara has conceived of God as phenomenal and the Absolute as real. The same position, we have seen, obtains in Bradley. But coming to Radhakrishnan's own position, we find him protesting against such a distinction.

Coming to the position of another important philosopher, *viz.*, Rāmānuja, we find Radhakrishnan interpreting him thus: "Rāmānuja identifies God with the Absolute, beside which and beyond which nothing exists."[7] But Radhakrishnan does not wish to identify himself with the above position of Rāmānuja. Radhakrishnan observes,

> If the Absolute is supposed to be a transcendent changeless existence, it is a problem, how such an Absolute which has no history includes the time process and the evolution of the world. Unless Rāmānuja is willing to explain away the immutable perfection of the Absolute, and substitute a changing process, a sort of progressing perfection, he cannot give us any satisfactory explanation of the relation of the soul of the Absolute to its body.[8]

We have seen above that Radhakrishnan's main point of disagreement with Śaṁkara as also with Bradley arises because in the system of the latter philosophers, God is phenomenal and the Absolute real. Again, we have seen that Radhakrishnan is not ready to endorse Rāmānuja's view that God and the Absolute are identical.

Thus we find that Radhakrishnan's main difficulties in respect of the problem of God and the Absolute may be stated in a nutshell thus:

1. The Absolute is non-relational and non-temporal; and therefore it cannot be identical with God who is bound up with the temporal process.

2. God is supreme from the religious point of view and therefore cannot be regarded as phenomenal.

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[5] Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 540.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 554.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 714.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 714.

The first difficulty rules out Radhakrishnan's agreement with Rāmānuja, while the second difficulty prevents him from going all the way with Śaṁkara and Bradley.

It is clear from the above analysis of Radhakrishnan's position that he wants a God bound up with the temporal process and yet not phenomenal so that such a God may be taken to be an aspect of the 'Supreme' from the cosmic point of view. We venture to suggest that Radhakrishnan's demand is impossible to conceive of without contradiction of thought. We cannot have it both ways. The moment we put God within time, *ipso facto*, we make God phenomenal. But Radhakrishnan shies at this logical conclusion. He will not have a phenomenal God, yet he will put God within the temporal process. Can we have a God essentially bound up with the life of time and yet not phenomenal? If we must have a God who is bound up with the world in an organic way moving with the temporal process, let such a God be recognised without hesitation to be phenomenal. Otherwise, God must be put out of the temporal process and identified with the changeless Absolute. But such a God, will not be Radhakrishnan's 'God of Religion' who is described thus; "God as the universal mind working with a conscious design, who is at once the beginning of the world, the author of its order, the principal of its progress and the goal of its evolution, is not the God of religion unless we take into account the facts of religious consciousness."[9] Then again, "Our moral life tells us that God is not only the goal but the spring and sustainer of moral effort."[10] Thus a concept of God as a supreme person extending a helping hand to struggling humanity emerges, one who is consciously putting into operation a divine design and is eliciting the co-operation of man in this divine purpose. This, of course, is the God of religion, the full-blooded God who can inspire devotion and elicit co-operation from human mortals. It is not the passionless and the changeless Absolute—an arid intellectualistic concept. But, unfortunately, this warm-blooded God of religion cannot be outside the world of phenomena. Devotion, love, grace, etc., are facts of religious phenomena. They are essentially events in the cosmic life of time. The moment we put this pulsating God out of the world of phenomena, he loses all his religious characteristics and freezes into a rigid passionless concept in which love, devotion, compassion and grace vanish into meaninglessness.

Thus we see that the God of religion whom Radhakrishnan believes to be bound up with the temporal process is essentially phenomenal.

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[9] *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 333.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 333.

In fact, his own views, if dispassionately interpreted, inevitably lead to the conclusion that God is phenomenal.

> If God is bound up with the world, subject to the category of time, if his work is limited by the freedom of man and the conditions of existence, however infinite he may be, in the quality of his life, in power, knowledge and righteousness, he is but an expression of the Absolute. But man wants to know the truth of things in itself, in the beginning—nay, before time and plurality.....[11]

From the above extract, we notice that Radhakrishnan reiterates that God is subject of the ' category of time ' and that he is but an ' expression of the Absolute'. Then again when he says that man wants to know ' the truth before time and plurality ', there remains no room for doubt in the interpretation of Radhakrishnan's thought. To say that God is within the category of time amounts to accepting that He is phenomenal. To say that God is an expression of the Absolute does not save him from being phenomenal, because as Bradley and Śaṁkara have pointed out, all that appears is an expression of the Absolute. Coming to another significant point in the above extract, we notice that Radhakrishnan voices man's desire 'to know the truth of things in itself in the beginning—nay, before time and plurality'.

It is clear that Radhakrishnan is conscious of the fact that ultimate truth does not reside in the God of religion. To rise from the plane of truth in which the God of religion exists to that of ultimate truth, one must, therefore, make the passage from the knowledge of God to that of the Absolute. If God is beyond phenomena would He not be beyond time and plurality as well ? But, as the truth of "things-in-themselves ", consists in the knowledge of the Absolute, it becomes amply clear that the God of religion is nothing but phenomenal.

Let us consider another extract from Radhakrishnan.

> While the Absolute is pure consciousness and pure freedom and infinite possibility it appears to be God from the point of view of the one specific possibility which has become actualised. While God is organically bound up with the universe, the Absolute is not.[12]

To say, that God is organically bound up with the universe is to accept implicitly that God is phenomenal. So also to state that the Absolute appears to be God points to the same conclusion.

In the concluding paragraph of *An Idealist View of Life*, we find Radhakrishnan stating,

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[11] *An Idealist View of Life*, pp. 342–43.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 343.

> God who is the creator, sustainer and judge of this world is not totally unrelated to the Absolute. God is the Absolute from the human end. When we limit down the Absolute to its relation with actual possibility, the Absolute appears as supreme wisdom, love and Goodness.[13]

Finally, *An Idealist View of Life* concludes with the lines,

> We call the supreme the Absolute when we view it apart from the cosmos, God in relation to the cosmos. The Absolute is the precosmic nature of God and God is the Absolute from the cosmic point of view.[14]

That God is not ' totally unrelated to the Absolute ' does not save God from being phenomenal. Since God as also the world may be said to be an appearance of the Absolute, it is clear that God cannot be totally unrelated to the Absolute. Then again, Radhakrishnan states that God is the Absolute from ' the human end '. Now what exactly is the metaphysical significance of the human end ? Is the ' human end ' capable of giving us ultimate truth or is it vitiated with the limitations of the finite understanding of human beings ? If limitation were not an essential characteristic of the human grasp of reality, it would be superfluous to qualify any position by the phrase, ' the human end '. We conclude, therefore, that metaphysically, ' the human end ' is nothing but the phenomenal world as it appears to the human understanding. Therefore, the Absolute comes down to human beings as ' an appearance ' or ' a phenomenon '.

This is the logical implication of Radhakrishnan's own position. When Radhakrishnan says, " When we limit down the Absolute to its relation with actual possibility, the Absolute appears as supreme Wisdom, Love and Goodness ", one may legitimately ask, what exactly is this process of ' limiting down ' the Absolute ? Does it not amount to the Absolute ' appearing ' as a phenomenon ? Then again, when Radhakrishnan says that the Supreme is the Absolute viewed apart from the cosmos, the metaphysical implication is that the Absolute is beyond the phenomenal world. Again we are told that the Supreme is God when viewed in relation to the cosmos. Is this not to suggest that the concept of God emerges when we view, ' Reality ' or the ' Absolute ' as the ' cosmos ' or ' phenomenon ' ? " The Absolute is the precosmic nature of God and God is the Absolute from the cosmic point of view." With this note, Radhakrishnan rings down the curtain on his *Idealist View*. The ending note confirms our own view that Radhakrishnan

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[13] *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 345.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 345.

should have, in the interest of consistency, drawn the conclusion that while the Absolute is ' real ', God is ' phenomenal '.

The above analysis, we hope, has made it amply clear that in tackling the problem of the relation between God and the Absolute, Radhakrishnan, in spite of his desperate attempts to conserve for God the highest religious as well as metaphysical status, has failed to rescue God from the contamination of the phenomenal world. Moreover, by trying to avoid the conclusion that God is phenomenal, he has fallen a prey to logical contradiction. Now, we propose to examine the other end of the problem, *i.e.*, the position of the Absolute in Radhakrishnan's philosophy. In his reply to critics, Radhakrishnan states,

> The Supreme in its non-relational aspect is the Absolute; in its active aspect is God. The Supreme, limited to its relation to the possibility which is actually accomplishing itself in the world, is the world spirit.... The abstract possibility and the concrete realisation are both contained in the one reality which is Absolute-God.[15]

Here we must notice the important point that ultimate reality has been designated as the ' Supreme ' or ' Absolute-God '. This logically implies that the ' Absolute ' is no more the last word in the matter of ultimate reality of the universe. The ' Supreme ' or the ' Absolute-God ' is allotted this privileged position in the scheme of the universe. The Absolute now becomes merely an aspect of the Supreme. The same view is reflected by Radhakrishnan in his, *An Idealist View of Life*. " We call the Supreme the Absolute when we view it apart from the cosmos. "[16] There remains no doubt therefore that according to Radhakrishnan, the highest truth, the ' One ' without the other is the ' Supreme ' and both God and the Absolute must be considered to be the aspects of the ' Supreme '. This analysis of Radhakrishnan's position is very important and has far-reaching metaphysical implications.

What is the metaphysical status of the Absolute which is logically implied in the above view? Logically, the Absolute can no more be regarded as the highest metaphysical reality because this status has been given by Radhakrishnan to the Supreme an aspect of which is to be the Absolute. While both Śaṁkara and Bradley consider the Absolute to be the highest reality, Radhakrishnan coins a different entity, the ' Supreme ' or ' Absolute-God ' and makes the Absolute an aspect of the same. Here a difficulty of momentous nature arises. If the Absolute is not identical with the Supreme but merely an aspect of the

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[15] *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*, p. 796.

[16] *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 345.

Supreme, do we not do irreparable damage to the concept of the Absolute? Will the basic position of Absolute Idealism bear the strain of this distortion of the Absolute? The Absolute, if anything, is the highest monistic reality, second to none. But here we find Radhakrishnan allowing the 'Supreme' or the 'Absolute-God' to usurp the sole reign of the Absolute. Thus Radhakrishnan seems to have taken undue liberties with the very concept of the Absolute and made it as it were into a non-Absolute. If the Absolute is merely an aspect of the 'Supreme', it is the latter which becomes the Absolute logically, and not the Absolute itself. Thus Radhakrishnan's thought boils down to the paradoxical position that the Absolute is not 'Absolute' after all!

In sum, we find, that Radhakrishnan posits the 'Supreme' and derives from this concept both 'God' and the 'Absolute'. He tries to give to the God of religion a co-ordinate metaphysical status with that of the Absolute of metaphysics. In this attempt, he invites contradiction of thought in that though he binds the God of religion with the temporal process, he refuses to admit that such a God, *ipso-facto*, must be phenomenal. The concept of the Absolute suffers equal distortion at the hands of Radhakrishnan. The 'Supreme' or the 'Absolute-God' becomes the highest metaphysical reality and usurps the position of the Absolute of Absolute Idealism as the only reality which is second to none.

Thus we find that in trying to save the "God of Religion", Radhakrishnan sacrifices the 'Absolute' of metaphysics. But the pity is that even with this costly sacrifice, he fails to save the God of religion from the world of phenomena.

An Explanatory Note

The author of this paper is aware that the above criticism of Radhakrishnan's position is based on the assumption that Radhakrishnan accepts the distinction between 'appearance' and 'reality' or 'phenomenon' and 'noumenon' in some form or other. It would be unfair to Radhakrishnan if this assumption is not substantiated. We, therefore, adduce the following evidence to show that our assumption is amply justified.

Let the following pronouncements of Radhakrishnan be considered. "The view which regards the multiplicity as ultimate is deceptive."[17] It is clear that the implication is that 'multiplicity' is appearance or phenomenon and 'oneness' is 'reality' or 'noumenon'.

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[17] *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 94.

In the next pronouncement which we quote, we need not look for an implicit meaning because our author is manifestly explicit. He says:

> The negative descriptions of the Supreme and the doctrine of *Māyā* which are said to be characteristics of Hindu mysticism are employed to denote the distance between time and eternity, between appearance and reality.[18]

In his 'reply to critics' which shows his comparatively recent philosophical position, Radhakrishnan accepts the doctrine of *Māyā*, which according to him, " is also used for ignorance by which we do not recognise the principle of the universe".[19]

" Śaṁkara ", according to Radhakrishnan, " is rightly credited with the systematic formulation of the doctrine of *Māyā*".[20] Having given this appreciative certificate to Śaṁkara, Radhakrishnan interprets Śaṁkara's doctrine of *Māyā* thus: " The principal categories of the world of experience, time, space and cause are self-contradictory."[21] This quotation could have been taken straight from Bradley's pen—a staunch votary of the distinction between appearance and reality. The quotation runs further: " Through thought which is itself a part of the relative world, we cannot know the absolute self. Our experience is a waking dream. Science and logic are parts of it and products of it too."[22] One cannot fail to hear the voice of Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* once again.

Lastly, Radhakrishnan sums up his own position in his reply to critics and removes any likely shadow of doubt as to his acceptance of the distinction between appearance and reality. Under the caption, " The Status of the World and the Doctrine of *Māyā* ", he says: " The world is not a modification of Absolute Being; for in that case Absolute Being would cease to be Absolute and become subject to modifications". Therefore, " a distinction is made between *parināma* or modification and *vivarta* or appearance".[23] Thus the world becomes a *vivarta* or appearance.

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[18] *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 298.

[19] 'Reply to Critics', *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*, p. 800.

[20] *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 86.

[21] *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 34.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[23] 'Reply to Critics', *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*, p. 800.

Whether the distinctions between 'appearance and reality' or 'phenomenon and noumenon' are justified or not is quite a different question. The thesis of this paper is that once you accept these distinctions, the conclusion necessarily follows that the God of religion is phenomenal. Radhakrishnan's position in respect of the problem of God and the Absolute betrays logical inconsistency; for, while our author accepts the distinction between appearance and reality, he shies at the conclusion which inevitably follows from such acceptance.

THE VAIṢṆAVA VIEW OF LIFE

By Dr. S. B. Dasgupta

The influences of a religious faith on its adherents cannot be determined in a very generalised way as they obtain varying shades according to the varying degrees of the faith itself, or we may say, according to the varying nature of the individuals on whom the faith works. To make some convenient broad division, we may say that there may be people whom religious faith has made indifferent towards worldly life, everything being renounced or sacrificed for the cause of the supreme spiritual realisation; there may be others of a lower calibre whose natural interest is in the comfortable living of worldly life, but who would like to have the procedure of their daily life purified and sublimated as far as possible through some religious faith and ideals which work through some enjoined routine work of practices and ceremonies; the additional attraction is supplied in these cases by what may be said to be an eagerness to practise one's faith as if this were an After-life Insurance. There may yet be and actually is another section of people who are strongly opposed to the idea of holding spiritual life and worldly life as contradictory or contrary to each other, but hold them as inseparably related each to the other in the fulfilment of the ideal of an integral life.

The general statement made above may well be remembered in discussing the question of the Vaiṣṇava View of life; for the Vaiṣṇava View means as much the view expressed by an exclusive spiritualist as that expressed by a man in the society who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow; to these may be added the view expressed by the serious and sincere religious aspirant who may try to realise the truth of supreme love in and through the human relations so that finitude may serve as the medium through which infinity may reveal its mystery.

But in spite of the great diversity of ways and manners in which the doctrines and practices of Vaiṣṇavism can be believed and observed by various groups of people or by various individuals, and notwithstanding the differences in the philosophical and theological concepts as well as in practices among the various sects and systems even in the province of Vaiṣṇavism itself, there are some striking points in religious concepts as well in the approach where all shades of opinion agree among themselves and disagree strongly with the views held by non-dualistic Vedānta. The cogency of an enquiry into the Vaiṣṇava View of life apart from the general question of the Hindu view will be evident only when we try to understand these striking points which indicate

the departure of the Vaiṣṇavas in their approach to truth and life from that of the non-dualistic Vedāntins. All differences between the Vaiṣṇavas on the one hand and the non-dualistic Vedāntins on the other proceed from the fundamental philosophic difference of dualism and non-dualism. While Śankarite Vedānta will never concede ultimate reality to man and the world, both being spatio-temporal appearances falsely attributed to the One All-pervasive Supreme Reality—the indeterminate and un-differentiated Brahman without a second, all schools of Vaiṣṇavism will speak of the reality of the individual man as also of the world he lives in, both being real and distinct in nature, though however, both proceed from the one ultimate truth and both have their support in that one ultimate truth.

Non-dualistic Vedānta would explain the world-process and the life-process in it as an illusory appearance due to the working of some inexplicable principle of Nescience (*Māyā*); Brahman, the One ultimate reality, has no organic relation with them; but Vaiṣṇavism, which represents dualistic Vedānta with differing shades of opinion, would agree in general in holding that the world-process and the infinite play of life-process in it are not purely illusory in nature but proceed as a process of self-manifestation of God Himself. Though man and the world proceed from this process of self-manifestation of God, this does not in any way interfere with the transcendent immutable nature of God; mutability may be explained as modifications of the infinite incomprehensible powers of God. Man and his world are not therefore pure illusions, they are real in the sense that they are modes and modifications of God's power and have their ultimate support in God. At the time of dissolution life and the material world become infinitely contracted once more in the very nature of God and lie dormant as potencies to be manifested in a future creation. This is substantially the same position as has been taken by the dualistic schools of Śaivism also. It has to be remembered, however, that the position of Vaiṣṇavism is not always that of dualism pure and simple; in most of the cases it is some sort of dualism in non-dualism, that being possible through the incomprehensible powers of God.

The main point to be noted here is that the power that is responsible for the world-process has always been explained by non-dualistic Vedānta as an illusory principle which is neither related even remotely to the truth of the Absolute nor is in any way a limitation to its truth. But all schools of Vaiṣṇavism are categorical and emphatic in their assertion that this power is not an unattached power; *Māyā* on the other hand represents the infinite variety of God's own power. This *Māyā* has therefore been conceived variously in Vaiṣṇavism according to her functions in different spheres. Many of the schools would speak

of *Yoga-māyā*, which is the power responsible for all mutation and transformation within God's own nature as the Supreme Lord, and such mutation and transformation make it possible for Him to enjoy Himself through His sportive dalliances within His own self. Then some of the schools would hold that the individual souls emanate from God as sparks or rays through a special *Māyā* or power of God which is more directly connected with God than the *Māyā* or power that is responsible for the manifestation and maintenance of the material world. But even this power responsible for the material world, however remote she may be from God in her workings, has her truth ultimately in God.

The question is, what has been the difference in the attitude of the Vaiṣṇavas towards the world and life because of this difference in the theory of *Māyā*. So far as the ascetic ideal is concerned, the difference seems to be very little; for, though the Vaiṣṇavas may accept the reality of the world and of the individual soul, they too, like the non-dualistic Vedāntins, would assign to the world and the life on it a very subsidiary place, earthly life being held subservient to the spiritual life in dualistic and non-dualistic schools alike, the same principle of abnegation and austerity being prescribed alike. But judging from the tendencies of people who are not strict ascetics, it may be said that the Vaiṣṇavas, having this dualistic trend of mind, prove themselves more appreciative of love, beauty and nicety than the non-dualistic Vedāntins. It may be interesting to note here that the mediæval saint-poets of India, including even those who would profess to be devotees to an unqualified God (*Nirguna-panthis*), betray a dualistic tendency, and show a sense of appreciation for the beauty and grandeur in nature and the unfathomable mysteries of human love. It is well known that the Vaiṣṇavas are particularly fond of myths and legends and they have evolved quite a network of them. These myths and legends are naturally based on those aspects of life and nature that reveal the grandeur of beauty and mysteries of love. Though nature and life come in more often as symbols or by way of analogy, the fervour with which they are dealt with by these poets clearly speaks of the keenness and genuineness of the sentiments of those poets towards life and nature. Again, because of this strong emotional bias the Vaiṣṇavas are more anthropomorphic in their theological concepts than the followers of a non-dualistic Vedānta.

The view that the cosmic process proceeds not from any principle of pure illusion, but from the *telos* of God, that the complicated and variegated texture of the universe is to be explained with reference to the infinite variety of God's own power, has developed in the nineteenth century a definite attitude towards man and nature among the religious aspirants, poets and thinkers with a humanistic leaning. The

clear conviction that the whole creation is the manifestation of the 'eternal dreams' of God and that it is the divine *will* that is shaping the Universe to an end, gives the whole of our life and world a clear meaning, a meaning that is derived from a God with an eternal creative impulse inspired by an eternal desire for self-realisation through self-creation. Desire here does not imply any imperfection or want in God; it implies an impulse involved in the very nature of God. The fact is best exemplified in the poems and other writings of Rabindranath Tagore which breathe all along the spirit that the universal process is a work of creative art with God and that man has every right to be proud of the fact that as on the one hand man requires the coming down of God close to man for the realisation of his true meaning, God on the other hand requires the love and co-operation of the finite man for the realisation of His infinite meaning. It will not be out of place we think, to mention in this connection that the Śankarite attitude to the world as illusory, is not the dominant Indian attitude towards the world, as it is sometimes wrongly taken to be; Upaniṣadic Vedānta, which actually represents the dominant Indian attitude, favours more the idea of the world as proceeding from the *will* of God and as sustained and guided by spiritual forces which represent but the workings of the *will* of God.

Another distinctive feature of Vaiṣṇavism is presented by its conception of the Divinity as a personal God with whom it is possible to have spiritual communion in absolute surrender and love. It is well known that Śankarite Vedānta always advocated the truth of the indeterminate and undifferentiated Absolute, leaving no scope for any personal relations, supreme spiritual realisation means complete identification of the individual soul with the Absolute—the univeral soul. Judging as a whole, the dominant Indian tendency, from the Upaniṣadic period down to the present time, seems to be a belief in an incomprehensible Divinity capable of revealing itself through all sorts of manifestation. But though the Vaiṣṇavas will not deny the immanent aspect of God where He is represented mainly through His powers, they will also emphasise His transcendent aspect in which He dwells and dallies as the personal God in His supra-natural abode made of spiritual substance. By a personal God the Vaiṣṇavas generally mean God enjoying within Himself (His abode also being included in His Own Self, as His abode is merely transfiguration of some of His internal powers) the full play of His internal powers. The final spiritual realisation of man can never be complete identification with God; for, in spite of the fact that man proceeds from God either as a wave on the surface of the sea, or as a spark from a fire, or as rays emanating from the lustrous sun, there is no homogeneity in the ultimate nature

of God and man. God is eternally all-pervasive in nature whereas man is eternally a spiritual atom; this atomic nature, though spiritual, will always exclude the possibility of his merging completely in God. It may be possible for a man through all processes of self-purification, self-surrender and love to enter into the supra-natural abode of God which represents an aspect of God's very nature; but entering into the nature of God does not permit man to identify himself with God; in his atomic spiritual nature he will ever remain a distinct spiritual entity in the abode of the Lord and eternally enjoy the bliss of His nature as an attendant—a witness to all His internal sportive dalliances.

A philosophical or rather theological conception of this type, emphasising the personal relationship between God and man, is naturally associated with an emotional approach which in varying degrees characterises the religious method of all schools of Vaiṣṇavism; devotion or love is the watchword, of course, with some variations in the definition of the word devotion or love. This emotional approach in the religious field makes them somewhat emotionally biased also in their attitude towards the facts and problems of earthly life. They develop a tendency more to rely on faith than on the rigour of reason. In social relations also this attitude will be slightly different from the attitude of the non-dualistic Vedāntins; I am to love my neighbour and serve him through acts of charity not because I feel myself completely identified with him; but because I feel unity with him, both being sparks from the same light of truth. The ideal that God, our Lord, is pure and infinite love in His essence also inspires one to love and compassion even in social relations. The Vaiṣṇava feels himself as the servant of God; he cannot serve his God, the Master, by neglecting man whom the Master Himself loves so much. To displease man and to hurt him is to displease the Lord and hurt Him; as the most loyal servant he therefore tries to serve his Lord by his service to man. In the *Gīta*, the *Divine Song*, the Lord as Kṛṣṇa makes service to man a condition precedent to the devotee's attaining the Lord through the application of intense love and devotion. It has been categorically said, "They (the devotees) attain Me provided they are bent on doing good to all the beings." The significance seems to be that the intensity of an emotional approach to God without cultivating a hard life of moral discipline through service to man may stultify the spiritual march of the devotee by making him miserably self-centered. The path of exclusive devotion to God must not be treated as an easy shortcut to the abode of the Lord by by-passing the hard life that confronts us from all sides. A true servant has to make himself true to the beloved creatures of the Lord before he can expect to make himself true to his Lord. So far as the question of justice is concerned, the Vaiṣṇavas

would share with others the common Hindu belief in the spiritual nature of the laws governing the universe; but they would in addition believe in the possibility of the direct or indirect intervention of God if and when the objective conditions so require.

The belief in God as pure love in essence leads to another cardinal belief of the Vaiṣṇavas, namely, the belief in the full or partial incarnation of God. A loving God cannot be indifferent to man and cannot therefore keep Himself absolutely aloof from man. It is a fact that *Māyā* as God's creative power is always alluring man with experiences of earthly enjoyment and making him oblivious of his true nature as the servant of God, but the misery of man affects God, and as soon as man surrenders himself to and takes shelter in Him, He becomes moved by compassion and helps man escape the clutches of *Māyā* and enter into His supra-natural abode (which is an extension of His own nature) and enjoy eternal communion with Him. When there is misery and affliction on a large scale, when there is widespread defiance of justice and triumph of injustice, the Lord becomes disturbed and moved to compassion and comes down on earth in human form: He sets things aright, vindicates the cause of righteousness and reestablishes His order of justice, love and peace. In course of fulfilling the divine purpose the incarnation establishes concrete human ideals which bring a new inspiration among the masses for revering the ideals and giving them some concrete shape even in their own life through cultivation of righteousness and compassion towards fellow-beings.

Another striking feature of Vaiṣṇavite thought is the stress laid on the element of divine mercy or grace. Grace follows from infinite compassion, which again follows from the essential nature of God as pure love. Implicit faith in the mercy of God, which alone can help man in his spiritual march as well as in the arduous course of his daily life on earth, is one of the cardinal virtues which a Vaiṣṇava must possess. To take refuge in God by absolute self-surrender is the best effort a Vaiṣṇava can make in his life here and hereafter. Spirit of unconditional surrender to the will of God and confidence in the infinite potentialities of His grace mark the thinking and being of a Vaiṣṇava throughout the whole course of his life.

But this question of divine grace brings in a question of a very fundamental nature. Not only the Hindus, but the Indians as a whole, including the Buddhists and the Jainas, are believers in the law of *Karma* (action). As one sows so one reaps—is the simplest formula known even to the masses of Indians. Does this theory of divine grace imply a break in the law of *Karma*? Is it meant by the Vaiṣṇava belief in divine grace that one may do any amount of evil work throughout

the whole of one's life, but yet be liberated just by self-surrender at the last moment; or is it to be believed that God is prepared to condone all sins of man of whatever nature they may be, provided after all he takes shelter in the mercy of God? To put it in a more blunt way, should we say that this process of self-surrender is just a convenient shortcut in the religious as well as in the earthly life of man?

The whole question arises, we think, out of a misunderstanding of the Vaiṣṇava belief in divine grace. It has to be marked in the first instance that grace does not mean an act of arbitrary favour on the part of God to whomsoever He chooses; on the other hand we must understand that unconditional self-surrender is not a thing to be made either as policy or on the spur of the moment. Spirit of self-surrender develops as a result of arduous acts of self-discipline, self-purification, cultivation of moral virtues and service to the beloved creatures of God—and all these not even in one life—but through a cycle of innumerable births. Spirit of surrender therefore presupposes a long course of preparation and the spirit dawns on man as a fruition of his past act of righteousness, benevolence and self-purification. There is, therefore, really no break in the law of *Karma*; with the development of the attitude that work is being done through man by the *will* of God —and man is not actually the doer, there develops the aptitude of taking the fruition of activities not as such, but as the act of mercy on the part of God. It is indeed an act of mercy in the sense that the Lord was kind enough to ordain things in such a way as to make the laws of nature help man, through the law of *Karma*, to the path of the Lord and finally to the land of the Lord Himself. In all his activities in life a Vaiṣṇava therefore tries to develop an outlook that the active will of God ordains the whole of his life and world—he serves merely as an instrument through which the divine will works. This is a conviction, which, when fully developed, gives never-failing strength to his character and sustains him throughout his life. Belief in the grace of God is therefore another way of belief in the eternal justice of God —here and hereafter. What is rationally interpreted as the law of *Karma* is interpreted as divine grace in faith.

We have given at the very outset an indication of a trend of thought in Vaiṣṇavism where spiritual life and terrestrial life are not taken to be mutually exclusive but are taken as complementary each to the other in an ideal of integral life where the two are happily harmonised. The main approach in this direction has been by attempting to develop a perspective where the legends and myths that have developed around the Divinity can be interpreted in human terms and realised through our purified and sublimated human relations. We have hinted before that the Vaiṣṇavas have generally an æsthetic bent of mind and are

extremely fond of the legends and myths that have developed round the Divinity, particularly round God as Kṛṣṇa. The legend says, for instance, that Kṛṣṇa in his divine sports became the darling baby of the mother Yaśodā and the father Nanda—a cowherd woman and cowherd man. A humanistic Vaiṣṇava would tell any father or mother, "Just look at your darling baby that dances in a sportive mood in the outskirt of your cot and pleases you throughout the whole day by the exuberance of its smiles and cries and freaks and pranks; try to feel, it is not a baby merely of flesh and blood that stands before you; it is the child Kṛṣṇa which demands all your attention and affection; try to feel that in whatever you do for your child you do nothing but worship the Lord as the eternal Darling Baby; even the ordinary duties of domestic life will in this way be transformed into a process of life-long worship—and the world itself will be transformed into the supra-natural abode of the Lord." It will be interesting to note here that there developed within the province of Vaiṣṇavism a new sect which aspired after realising the supreme spiritual experience of love in and through our human love by undergoing a process of strict discipline, purification and sublimation. The finest legends in Vaiṣṇavism grew round the love episodes of Kṛṣṇa and His sweetheart Rādhā—a cowherd girl. It is held that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are actually two principles in which God sportively divides Himself as the beloved and the lover—the enjoyed and the enjoyer; it is possible for a woman through a continuous process of self-purification to realise her true self as being nothing but Rādhā; and the lover can in the similar process realise his true self to be nothing but Kṛṣṇa; love at this level can enable man, it is held, to give a glimpse of what divine love in the supra-natural land means. Apart from being the doctrines of a particular Vaiṣṇava cult, similar doctrines have exerted a tremendous influence on the day-to-day life of a section of men in society, who instead of despising the ordinary life on earth in quest of a spiritual life, pursued a method of transforming this very life into a life divine by taking the whole of this matter-of-fact life from a spiritual perspective.

One word before we conclude. We have spoken of the Vaiṣṇava View of life as contrasted with the non-dualistic Vedāntic view of life. It is necessary to sound a note of caution here that often the differences are more doctrinal than historical. So far as the lay-people are concerned they are always for a compromise and a popular synthesis; if the philosophers or the theologians would not do it, they would do it for themselves in their own way. There have again been quite a number of great spiritual aspirants who would speak of dualism and non-dualism as mere ways of taking things—the ultimate spiritual experience in both the approaches being quite the same.

THE VAISNAVITE VIEW OF MAN WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE TEACHINGS OF ŚRI RĀMĀNUJA

By Prof. M. Yamunacharya

Man (*Puruṣa*) is said to be an entity distinct from nature and transcendent to it (*yah parah prakriteh proktah*). Yet he is wrapped up in a material organism consisting of head, hands and feet and other cognitive (*Jñānendriya*) and conative (*Karmendriya*) organs. This apparatus of the human body is partly psychical and partly physical. It is a living, breathing, moving body (*Chetana*). It is a sentient organism capable of thinking (*Jñāna*), feeling (*Icchha*) and acting (*Kriya*). It is this organism that is termed body or *Śarīra*. *Śarīra* is an instrument (*Karaṇa*) by which the spirit in man seeks to express itself and establishes its contact with an external world consisting of animate (*Chit*) and inanimate beings (*Achit*). It is invested (*dattam śarīram*) with the psycho-physical organism as a necessary means or instrument by which the individual soul can have its inherent perfection unfolded (*svasvarūpa āvirbhāva*). Rāmānuja like the other vedāntins describes the soul as a reality which should not be identified with the body that it possesses (*dehātma viveka*). The soul, however, deprived of the body, lies moribund or embryonic (*Pinḍa*) almost indistinguishable in that condition from inert bodies (*Jaḍa*). It lies motionless like a bird with wings not yet sprouted making it impossible for it to take its flight heavenward of which it is inherently capable. The individual soul is lifted by God, out of its dormant condition (*anādi māyayā suptah*), out of tender regard for the soul and its ultimate destiny. It is lifted out of its inert condition and started on its career towards the goal of perfection. A condition *sine qua non* of the manifestation of its perfection is provided by its going through a bodily existence. The body is thus a necessary vehicle, the purpose of which is to serve the soul in this regard. Rāmānuja defines body (*Śarīra*) as 'Any substance which a sentient soul is capable of completely controlling and supporting for its own purposes and which stands to the soul in an entirely subordinate relation'.

It is the soul's association with the material body (*achitsambanda*) that is fraught with a double consequence, one of which is desirable and the other undesirable from the point of view of the ultimate destiny of the soul. The undesirable consequence is that of confounding one's soul with the material body (*jaḍadehe aham buddhih*) and ignoring

its true nature as something different from inanimate nature and as having characteristics like knowledge, bliss and intended to be always subservient to God and to nothing else (*ananyārha śeṣatva*). It is necessary to know that the soul transcends the body (*dehātirikta*). In the absence of this cognition the individual soul is apt to fall into the delusion that it is all in all and its only end in view is to enjoy to the full earthly joys and that it is licensed to do anything it likes. It is this false sense of egotism which generates the notion of 'I' and 'Mine' and which deludes it to think that it alone exists and is independent of God. It follows the lure of the sense-life oblivious of the fact that there is an eternal life (*nitya vibhūti*) of which it is a true inheritor. So long as the consciousness that the soul is dependent on God for its existence endures, it is on a safe passage to the goal. If the snare and the delusion that it is independent of God and it is its own sole proprietor enters into its consciousness then all the evil begins. The chief sin is the act of stealing to oneself what belongs properly to God (*ātmāpahāra*). All other sins emanate from this original sin (*akhila pāpa mūlam*). This sin makes man run after petty (*alpa*) and impermanent (*asthira*) pleasures, the tainted pleasures of the senses (*doṣa duṣṭa śabdādi bhoga*) and the lusts of the flesh.

Notwithstanding this abuse of the body when it is given over to the lusts of the flesh, oblivious of its high destiny, one should not ignore the fact that this wonderfully constructed body with its limbs and organs is intended to be dedicated to the service of God (*vichitrā deha sampattih Iśvarāya niveditum*). Deprived of this marvellous body (*vichitrā dehasampattih*) man is deprived of both the enjoyment of life here and of life hereafter (*bhogamokṣa śūnya*). In other words, this very body is the means of both bondage (*bandha*) and liberation (*mokṣa*) of the soul. It all depends on how it is used.

The body was dowered on man by God out of a tenderness for him and concern for his welfare so that he may reach God and gain His presence. There can be no higher end than this to man. This is the *summum bonum* of human life. The body is a boat (*plava*) given to man by which he could cross the stream of worldly life (*samsāra nistaraṇa upāya*). The goal to be reached is no doubt a distant one but it can be reached only by strenuous individual endeavour. As Spinoza says, all excellent things are as rare as they are difficult. As Gīta puts it, those who hunger for the attainment of God are few indeed (*kaschid yatati siddhaye*). And they are able to reach Him by endeavour (*abhyāsa*) and renunciation (*vairāgya*). The individual has the freedom to choose the way of life that leads him to God. This would involve moral responsibility for what he does. But hunger for God may germinate in man in one life, or a series of lives may be required for the

purpose. The individual's freedom is not absolute. Man has freedom given him (*datta svātantrya*) just sufficient for him to work out voluntarily his liberation from impediments and shackles (*virodhi parihāra*) with which he has bound himself by a chain of his own *Karma* or accumulated deeds. The greatest problem for Rāmānuja was to reconcile the perfection of God with freedom of man. He solves the problem by his doctrine of *Datta Svātantrya* or dowered freedom. By his own misdeeds and his forgetfulness of his final destiny of fellowship with God (*Sāyujya*), the individual gets bogged in *Samsāra* or the flux of becoming with its attendant sorrow and suffering. Subject to the normal and natural fluctuations of individual existence, the embodied individual goes through the vicissitudes of boyhood, youth and old age which are affected and infected with tainted pleasures and inescapable pain. The sufferings and sorrows of life, however, act as cathartic agents and make the individual sad and forlorn and look for a means of escape which would be readily made available to him by Providence. He longs for freedom and becomes a *Mumukṣu*. He finally resorts to God as his only refuge after having been deprived of every other refuge which he discovers to be slippery (*anyathā śaraṇam nāsti tvameva śaraṇam mama*). Weariness of a wandering life tosses him to God's breast. God waits and watches patiently for the soul to come to Him. He goes in quest of life and leading which will be provided for him by a kindly teacher who comes his way. And obtaining a kindly teacher who will lift the individual from a slough of despond which has been responsible for filling his mind with a corroding pain and longing for liberation is an expression of the spontaneous Grace of God (*nirhetuka kripa*). Rāmānuja describes God as a great commiserator (*parama kāruṇika*) and friend (*suhrit*). Rāmānuja describes the process of redemption by means of a parable.

The process of redemption consists in the teacher bringing to the sorely afflicted individual a sense of his lost divine heritage which it is still open to him to recover by suitable means. Rāmānuja's description of this human redemption runs thus: " Take the case of a young prince, who, intent on some boyish play, leaves his father's palace and losing his way, does not return. The king thinks his son is lost, the boy himself is received by some good Brahmin who brings him up and teaches him without knowing who the boy's father is. When the boy has reached his sixteenth year and is accomplished in every way, some fully trustworthy person tells him, ' Your father is the ruler of all these lands, famous for the possession of all noble qualities, wisdom, generosity, kindness, courage, valour and so on, and he stays in his capital, longing to see you, his lost child. Hearing that his father is alive and a man so high and noble, the boy's heart is filled with supreme joy;

and the king also, understanding that his son is alive, in good health, handsome and well-instructed, considers himself to have attained all a man can wish for. He then takes steps to recover his son, and finally the two are re-united" (*Śri Bhāṣya*).

The ' Good Brahmin ' stands for the teacher or Guru who mediates between God and man and brings the two together or shows the way by which this re-union could be accomplished. In the Vaiṣṇavism of Rāmānuja the role of the Guru or Acharya as an intercessor is extremely important for the redemption of man. The right kind of teachers are described as those who are entirely free from egotism (*nirahankāri*), those who are always desirous of the welfare of others (*para samriddhi priyāh*) and those who are not swayed by love of fame or profit (*khyāti-lābha nirapekṣaṇam*). The goal of man is to reach God (*Bhagavad-prāpti*) and the compassionate Guru leads him by the hand to his goal, and takes upon himself the responsibility of commending him to God. The first among the Gurus is Śri or the Spouse of Viṣṇu who is the mediator or intercessor between God and man. She is the very embodiment of Grace or Mercy whose efforts make it possible for the contrite individual to be forgiven by the Lord for his sins. God's justice comes to be seasoned with mercy.

The initiation of man into the path that leads him to God (*Dīkṣa*) is described on the analogy of the marriage ceremony. This is a marriage between God and the individual soul (*ātma vivāha*) which is described thus in a small Vaiṣṇava treatise. *Śriyah-patih* (*i.e.*, Nārāyaṇa) is the cloud. A downpour of love fell from it. In the soil of compassion, the plant of life sprouted up. Thus to the Father of the Longing and the Mother of Wisdom, a girl was born, which was baptised as the Soul. She was fed with the food of taste for God. In due course Wisdom bloomed in the child; and time was ripe for marriage. Marriage is a sacrament which is performed in presence of Fire (*Agni Sākṣi*). Fire is ignited, Godly men are clustered together; and the Bride-Soul is handed over to the Spouse-God with the oblation of Self-Knowledge (*Ātma Jñāna*). The Bride is vested in the robes of humility, and the thread of service is tied round the neck; and decked with the Jewels of Name and Form. She is led to the Seat of Faith, the Fire of All-Consciousness is fanned, fed by the Fuel of Renunciation, and the Final act of Surrender is offered into the Fire. The Bride is then conducted into the Nuptial Chamber of Heaven, where on the Bed of Joy, Marriage is consummated—one game won in the Cosmic Sport ! The Soul now *being one* with God *is itself God* by participation.

Knowledge of the scripture is also necessary so that man may have a clear notion of the nature of God, nature of the world and nature of

himself. A knowledge of the three truths, *chit*, *achit* and *Īśhvara* (*tattva traya*) is considered essential to any one who would aspire for liberation.

Man must realize that he is a soul and a spirit distinct from the body, the sense, the mind, life and intellect. He is a conscious entity and is characterised by bliss and knowledge (*jñānānandamayastvātma*). More than that, he is controlled (*niyāmya*) and supported (*dhārya*) by God and dependent (*śeṣam*) on Him (*Śeṣohi paramātmanah*). While man's body is perishable, his soul is imperishable (*akṣaram*) and eternal (*nitya*). The real man is the one who shines in the heart (*hridy āntar-jyotih puruṣah*). The soul in him is like a light that shines by itself (*svasmai svayam prakāśatva*) and does not need another light to show it. The immortal soul that is in man is neither born (*aja*) nor does it die (*nitya*). Birth and death are the accidents of the body. Birth is the *association* of the soul with a body (*deha sambandha*) and death is the *dissociation* of the soul from the body (*deha viyoga*).

Man is a knower (*jñātā*), is a doer (*kartā*) and enjoyer (*bhoktā*). These capacities are due to the fact that he possesses a consciousness which expresses itself in such states as thinking (*jñānā*), desiring (*chikīrśa*) and striving (*prayatna*). That man is a free agent is proved by the fact that the scriptures lay down the moral injunctions (*vidhi*) and prohibitions (*niṣedha*) for him to be guided and he is left free to choose them or violate them. This truth is expressed by the *Brahma Sūtra* which declares that scriptural injunctions can have a meaning only when man has the power of moral choice (*kartā śāstrārthavatvāt*). This freedom on the part of man will not militate against God's perfection and omnipotence for the freedom conceded to him is the gift of God himself (*Īśvara datta svātantrya*) so that he may exercise it towards his own perfection. The exercise of freedom is a necessary condition of progress. When man takes himself under his own management and puts forth earnest efforts at his own elevation, God prospers him in his endeavour and fills him with increasingly great relish in doing good deeds (*kalyāṇeśu karmasu ruchim utpādayati*).

The implications of *Śeṣatva* or dependence on God are that man must make himself fit for God's acceptance. He must shape his life and conduct in such a way that he makes himself the object of relish to God like the fragrance of sandal and flowers (*Śeṣatvam nāma chandana kusuma tāmbūlādivat tasva iṣta viniyogārhatvam*). Man must become as sweet and selfless as a flower which emits fragrance for the enjoyment of others and not of itself, and as a tree which yields fruit which it does not itself eat. This living for others and for God is the sign of a ripe soul. Putting oneself entirely at the disposal of God is what is implied by '*Śeṣatva*' (*Śeṣatvam yatheṣtam viniyogārhatvam*).

The eight-syllabled mantra (*Om Namo Nārāyaṇāya*) is a pledge that man gives at his initiation into *Śri Vaiṣṇavism* that he hence forward would live only for *Nārāyaṇa* and not for himself. The Lord (*Bhagavān*) and those who belong to God (*the Bhāgavatas*) become the objects of his devotion and service.

The individual souls are to be found at different levels of unfoldment. There are those that are still in bondage (*bandha*), those that have liberated themselves from bondage (*mukta*) and celestials (*nitya Sūri*) who are eternally free, but those who can incarnate themselves at will like God himself for the good of the world. Those that are still in bondage have in them the latent capacity for liberation which is obscured by the sins accumulated in life after life. It is this obscuration that is the veil of *Māyā*, which means in this system *avidya* or *ajñāna* or ignorance of one's own true nature (*sva svarūpa*). The life of the body is confounded with the life of the soul due to this *avidya*. But the capacity to emancipate himself from bondage to *Karma* lies inherent and latent in him like oil which is latent in the sesamum seed or like heat which is latent in a log of wood (*tila tailavat dāru vahnivat*). The oil has to be pressed out of the oilseed in order that it may become manifest. And the log of wood must be ignited in order that it may begin to burn. Similarly, the individual soul has to be pressed in order that his potentialities may be brought out. This is what is meant by *Sādhana* or spiritual endeavour. The light in man's soul comes to be lit up by another illumined soul. It is like one candle lit up by another (*dīpādutpanna pradīpavat*).

The auspicious sign that heralds a new life or a second life to man (*dvitīyam janma*) is the tender shoot of love of God germinating in his heart. This may happen at the end of many a peregrination of the soul in *Samsāra* (*janmāntara*). Austerity of life (*tapas*), uninterrupted contemplation of God and His excellences (*dhyāna*) which is likened to a seamless stream of oil (*taila dhāravat avichhinna santati dhāra*) and communion with Him (*samādhi*) will help man to shed his burden of accumulated sins (*janmāntara sahasreṣu tapodhyāna samādhibhih, narāṇām kṣīṇa pāpānām Kriṣṇe bhakthih prajāyate*). The process of the burning up of sins by love of God is compared to a spark of fire consuming a heap of cotton (*tula trāṣau agnivat*). *Jñāna* (*knowledge*) finally finds consummation in love (*bhakti*). Rāmānuja points out that unless knowledge of God ripens into love of God, mere knowledge would remain ineffective and unfruitful. He therefore advocates his doctrine of *bhakti rūpapānna jñāna* that is, knowledge ripening into love. In his hymn of prayer to God with which he begins his commentary on the Brahma Sūtras known as *Śri Bhāṣya*, he prays that his knowledge of God obtained by the study of the scriptures may be transformed

into intense love of the Lord (*bhavatu mama parasmin śemuṣi bhakit rūpa*).

When thus the individual, after his initial painful effort, reaches the state of liberation by the spontaneous and irresistible grace of God (*nirhetuka kripa*), he will have attained *Mokṣa* or liberation which is the *Parama Puruṣārtha* or the highest goal of man's existence. The ways that lead him to this are various and the way resorted to depends on the personal preference of the individuals. But the easiest and simplest of the roads open to man to reach God is the way of absolute unqualified self-surrender known as *Prapatti*. This does not demand learning or mortification of the flesh but demands a radical alteration in one's attitude to life. The one who follows this way is the *prapanna*, who is instantly put at ease with himself. He comes to lay the entire burden of his salvation on God himself (*bharanyāsa*) and lives a tranquil life, when the activities of his life become consecrated to service of God. The holiness he has attained by becoming the servitor of God expresses itself in his every act. He exemplifies the truth that to become the eternal servitor of God is the greatest vocation of man. He can become this only when he embodies in himself the auspicious qualities (*kalyāṇa guṇa*) or excellences of God himself who is the very embodiment of truth, goodness and beauty. The qualities of the votary of God who delights in his servitude to God (*pāratantrya*) which is his own real freedom (*svātantrya*) are enumerated in different ways. One of the Vaiṣṇava verses speaks of the art of worshipping him with eight kind of flowers. Each flower symbolizes a virtue of the soul (*ātmaguṇa*) or a : *Prapanna*. The verse reads: "*ahimsā prathamam puṣpam puṣpam indriya nigrahah, sarva bhūta dayā puṣpam kṣama puṣpam viśeṣateh, śanti puṣpam tapah puṣpam jñānam puṣpam, tathaiveca, satyam aṣta vidham puṣpam Viṣṇoh prītikaram bhavet.*" Non-injury is the prime of flowers dear to the Lord. The other flowers which are dear to Him are self-restraint, compassion for all things that live, forgiveness, peace, austerity, knowledge and truthfulness.

A key-word in Rāmānuja's Vaiṣṇava Philosophy is *kaṅkarya*, which means service of God (*Bhagavad kaṅkarya*), which fulfils itself in *Bhāgavata kaṅkarya* or the service of those who belong to God. This is the highest end conceivable to man. The Vaiṣṇava teachers who preceded and followed Rāmānuja had no hesitation in asserting that true liberation for the individual lay in obtaining the privilege to serve God forever and anon and to enjoy the bliss (*kaṅkarya rati*) that comes out of service rendered to God and to all that belongs to Him. One Vaiṣṇava teacher went to the extent of defining *Mokṣa* as nothing but the privilege of eternal service to God (*nitya kaṅkarya prāptireva mokṣah*). When this condition has been reached, man

will have attained the highest goal of his existence. Thus awakened from his dormant condition, man goes through the vicissitudes of worldly life and chastened by the trials and tribulations of life, he turns Godward and finds the consummation and crown of life in the enjoyment of bliss of service of God. He reaches the presence of God (*Sānnidhya*), becomes like unto Him (*Sārupya*) and finally becomes one with Him (*Sāyujya*). The saints of Vaiṣṇavism longed only for this *Mokṣa* and were content to even remain on earth eternally if it meant living in God and for God. The kingdom of God was here and now for them. To realize the *paramapada* or *vaikuṇṭha* (the kingdom of God) on the surface of the earth was their eternal dream. This sustained them in their faith and in their persistent endeavour to realize the dream on earth as it was in heaven (*paramapada*). One of the *Ālvārs* (Tamil Vaiṣṇava saints) sang '*iruppidam vaikundam vengadam*' —which means 'the Kingdom of God and the holy land are there where you dwell'.

SANKARA'S VIEWS ON RELIGIOUS LIFE

By Dr. K. Satchidananda Murty

I

The initial stage of religious life consists, according to Śankara, in the discharge of daily duties befitting one's birth and station (*varṇa* and *āśrama*) in life. Unless a person properly discharges all his duties in accordance with his station in life, he cannot be fit to receive the knowledge of Brahman. When he attains true knowledge of Brahman he is no more in need of doing anything, but for its very generation due discharge of one's duties is necessary.[1] But more important than due discharge of duties is the cultivation of mental purity, serenity and freedom from ambition, jealousy, lust, etc. These mental traits are so to say part and parcel (*antaranga*) of wisdom. He who does not have them cannot have wisdom.[2] On the other hand, although the due discharge of duties is not helpful in so intimate a manner for wisdom, nevertheless, without that there can be no desire for wisdom or generation of wisdom (*utpattisādhana*). There are also certain common practices which are to be followed by all men irrespective of their station in life. These are *japa* (reverential chanting of a sacred syllable, God's name or prayer), fasting, and worship of the Deity.[3] These are to be practised even by those who are unable to participate in the Vedic rituals on account of either poverty, widowhood, wandering mendicancy (as in the case of, *e.g.*, *Samvarta Raikva*), etc.[4] Such practices vouchsafe wisdom (*anugraha*), and they are to be followed by everybody.

When through all these means purity of mind is obtained, one is fit to enter the next stage of religious life, namely, *upāsanā*. But it should be remembered that purity of mind is absolutely necessary for this.[5] *Upāsanā* dispels *avidyā* (nescience),[6] destroys sin and indirectly leads to liberation.[7] Even after hearing the Upanishadic teaching *upāsanā* should be repeated till the final realization.[8] If however final

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[1] *Sutrabhaṣya*, 3.4.26; 3.4.27.

[2] *Ibid.*, 3.4.27.

[3] *Ibid.*, 3.4.38.

[4] *Ibid.*, 3.4. 36–37.

[5] *Brihadāranyakabhāṣya* (Anandaśrama Edn.), p. 714.

[6] *Sūtrabhāṣya*, 3.2.5.

[7] *Ibid.*, 3.2.21; 3.3.1; 3.3.42; 4.1.13 and 16; 1.3.40.

[8] *Ibid.*, 4.1.1.

realization does not come in this life, *upāsanā* should be continued till death, for the life hereafter depends upon the state of mind immediately preceding death.[9] So, as long as the absolute unity of the self is not realized, *upāsanā* must continue.[10]

Upāsanā is usually translated as worship. It is possible that the connotation of the word 'worship' in English may not be altogether identical with what Śankara understands by *upāsanā*. Śankara has clearly indicated what he means by *upāsanā*. He says that *upāsanā* is a means of spiritual progress (*abhyudaya sādhana*). The fruit of *upāsanā* is very near liberation or approximates to liberation (*kaivalya sannikrishta*). The object of *upāsanā* is Brahman, just a little changed (*ishadvikrita brahmanishaya*), that is, in *upāsanā* Brahman as such is not the object, but a Brahman conceived as slightly other than what It is really. The knowledge of non-duality is a mental mode, for every cognition is a mental mode (*manovritti*). Even so *upāsanā* is a mode (or a state) of the mind. But there is a difference between the knowledge (or cognition) of non-duality and *upāsanā*. Cognition of non-duality removes the cognition of difference superimposed on the Self, while *upāsanā* is to have a balanced and continuous mental mode (or fixation) in an object as represented in scripture and to shut out all other cognitions.[11] Elsewhere also, Śankara says the same: *Upāsanā* is to get nearer to a thing as described in the scripture, by making it the object of thought to abide for a very long time in a continuous and steadfast mental state.[12] *Upāsanā* manifests the real nature of the thing by making the mind pure. So it is helpful for obtaining the knowledge of non-duality and is easier because it has a concrete object.[13]

This is what emerges from the above account: *Upāsanā* is nothing but continuous and steadfast meditation on some object as represented in the scripture; for example, we can think of the person in the solar orb (*Savitri Purusha*) as God and meditate on his form. The sun then becomes a *pratika*—a symbol of God. As Śankara has reminded us, we do not for instance meditate on God as the person in the solar orb; we meditate on the person in the solar orb as God. The *Brahma-buddhi* is imposed on a particular thing,[14] *i.e.*, a particular thing is conceived as Brahman and meditated upon. Brahman is not conceived as the particular thing in question. There are many ways in which

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[9] *Sūtrabhaşya*, 4.1.12.

[10] *Ibid.*, 2.1.14.

[11] *Chāndogyabhāşya*, Introd.

[12] *Gitabhāşya*, 12, 3.

[13] *Chhandogyabhāşya*, Introd.

[14] *Sūtrabhāşya*, 4.1.5.

Brahman is symbolized; so any one of these symbols (*pratikas*) may be taken and meditated upon till what is meditated upon is intuited (*sākshātkāra*).[15]

The worship of a personal God as different from oneself, as residing in heaven or in the recess of one's heart or in an image, falls under this head. But there is a higher stage *ahamgrahopāsanā*. Here Brahman is meditated upon as the self. "Brahman is myself—I am Brahman." "O Deity, You are myself, I am Yourself"—this truth should guide meditation in this advanced stage.[16] As in the previous stage there is no more any symbolization. It is literally true that God is the self, for the Upanishad says that he who worships (meditates) upon the Deity as different from oneself is ignorant (*Brh.Up.* 1·4·10).

It cannot be objected that God and the self cannot be non-different because they have contradictory characteristics.[17] The contradictory characteristics are false; so as the limiting adjuncts are in illusion there is no difference between God and the individual self. This is not atheism (*īśvarābhāva*) because *Advaita* does not deny God or make Him out to be a transmigratory self; what it does is to maintain that the transmigratory self is of the nature of God when its transmigratoriness is removed.[18] This being the case, God the holy (*apagatapāpma*) is without a second and the alleged contradictory characteristics of any other self are false. There is no contradiction of this truth by perception, for prior to realization there is transmigratoriness on which perception, etc., are dependent. After realization there is no perceptual experience (*prabodhe pratyakshadi abhavah*). When one shakes off ignorance and awakens, thinking thus, "I am God—so does the Veda say", he realizes the truth and for him there is no more any ignorance.[19] In this most advanced type of *upāsanā* there is no more any distinction of the meditated and the meditator, the worshipped and the worshipper. As Śankara says in the *Vivekachūdāmaṇi*, those who are fully absorbed (*samāhitāh*) in the meditation of the Brahman become Brahman.[20] The example cited by Śankara is that of the insect becoming the large black bee. It is supposed that the large black bee catches hold of a particular kind of insect, stings it continuously, dazes it and hovers round it making its characteristic sound, and the insect is so filled up with the idea of the bee that it is transformed into a bee. Similarly,

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[15] *Sūtrabhāṣya*, 3.3.59.

[16] *Ibid.*, 4.1.3.

[17] *Ibid.*, 4.1.3.

[18] *Ibid.*, 4.1.3.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] *Vivekachūdāmani*, 357 and 359.

the person who is so full of the thought that he is God becomes God. The two stages of *upāsanā* correspond to the three stages of *dhāranā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi* outlined in the *Yoga* system. The banishment of all intruding thoughts, concentration of all thought upon a particular object which symbolizes God, and lastly unceasing meditation on oneself as God or on God as oneself—these are the stages of *upāsanā*. In fact Śankara says that *Yoga* means *upāsanā* derived from the Vedic text.[21] And in *Vivekachudāmani* he says that when the mind ripened (*pakva mana*) through constant meditation dissolves (or merges—*laya*) in Brahman, that is *nirvikalpa samādhi*.[22]

Śankara admits that *bhakti*, faith and *dhyāna* (*upāsanā*) are the three ways of attaining liberation.[22] In the *Sūtrabhāṣhya* he says that the practice of establishing the (idea of) self in the mind through *bhakti* and meditation, leads to intuition.[34] By *bhakti* is usually meant adoration of a personal God. But Śankara understands the term rather differently. Śankara distinguishes between *parā* and *aparā bhakti*. In *aparā bhakti* there is more of emotion than knowledge. When a man is in need on account of some danger (*artha*) or lack (*artharthi*) which he feels, he approaches God, or it may be that he is desirous of knowing the Truth—the real nature of God (*jijnāsu*). Devotion-*cum*-adoration (*bhakti*) which is motivated by any one of these is *aparā bhakti*—lower *bhakti*.[25]

There is another *bhakti*. The steadfast experienced (felt) conviction (*nischayarūpena avasthānam*) of the truth of the oneness of the individual soul and God generated by the teaching of scripture and *guru* is the supreme wisdom. This is what is called supreme *bhakti* (*parā bhakti*) or the fourth kind of *bhakti*, in addition to the above three kinds. Through this *bhakti* God is known in truth and then the idea of difference between God and the individual soul is completely annihilated.[26] This type of *bhakti* is also called exclusive *bhakti* or *ananya-bhakti*, for it does not allow one to attain anything other than God through any of the senses, nor does it find the least satisfaction in anything other than God or apart from God.[27] He who is endowed with such a *bhakti* is God himself (*jnāni tu ātmaiva*). For he is of the

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[21] *Sūtrabhāṣya*, 2.1.4.

[22] *Vivekachūdāmani*, 363.

[23] *Ibid.*, 48.

[24] *Sūtrabhāṣya*, 3.2.24. Also *Ratnaprabha*.

[25] *Gīta*, vii, 16.

[26] *Gītabhāṣya*, 18.55.

[27] *Ibid.*, 11.54.

belief that God is all.[28] The lower *bhakti* and also the *bhakti* which consists in doing one's duty in the spirit of God's worship is fruitful only in qualifying one to be fit for receiving wisdom or the supreme *bhakti*.[29] Supreme *bhakti*, which is another name for Brahman-knowledge, alone can result in liberation. Thus the highest type of *bhakti* consists in the firm unshakeable conviction (*samāhita chitta*) of the form, "I am God alone and not any one else".[30]

Śankara entirely assimilates *bhakti* to knowledge when he defines it as the inquiry (*anusandhāna*) into (or remembrance of) one's true nature.[31] He is unable to conceive of *bhakti* at its highest as anything other than *manana* and *nididhyāsana*, and that too the reflection of the identity of the self and God. In its lower manifestations, he is willing to conceive it as loving adoration of a personal God, distinguished from and transcendent to the individual soul. This is only a step in the right direction—a necessary step, he says in *Prabodhasudhakara*, for without *bhakti* for Krishna the mind *cannot* be purified—leading to supreme *bhakti*, or in other words true knowledge of Brahman.

We may now sum up Śankara's conception of religious life: Śankara has a high opinion of man and his surpassing superiority to the animal world. Man is a free agent who can discriminate between the good and the bad, the eternal and the fleeting, and choose one of them. As such he who is a man in the fullest sense would choose between the good and the bad and would duly discharge all the duties befitting his birth and station in life. This would make his mind pure and inquisitive.[32] At the same time by an exercise of his intelligence and power of discrimination he would get tired of all the evanescent goods of this as well as the other world (*iha amutra phala bhoga virāga*). Learning from scripture about God, the eternal God and End, man would try to enter into communion with Him. Every man cannot have a true conception of God. Each man's conception would depend upon the state of his mental development (*satvānurūpā sarvasya śraddha*). The savage cannot conceive of God as spirit, nor can the average cultured man conceive Him as the self. Very rare is the man who knows God in His essence (*kaschin mām vetti tattvataḥ*). So several graded types of symbolic worship (*pratika upāsanā*) are to be found in scripture. The one God is described as having various forms to suit the needs of men and their mental development. All conceptions and all forms of

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[28] *Gīta*, vii, 18.19.

[29] *Gītabhāṣya*, 18.55.

[30] *Ibid.*, vii, 18.

[31] *Vivekachūdāmaṇi*, 32.

[32] *Gītabhāṣya*, 18.10. *Brihadāranyakabhāṣya*, 4.4.22.

worship are not of the same value.[33] Nor can all men practise all of them. Each has to select that which is suitable to him and realize the object of his worship in his own way. Among the various kinds of worship external ritualistic worship which consists in decorating an image, offering food and burning incense in front of it, etc., is the lowest. Slightly better than this is prayer, oral utterance of hymns supplication, or chanting of God's name with faith (*stutirjapo adhamo bhāvah*).

Better than this is *dhyāna* or *upāsanā*, continuous meditation. And this meditation too should be on Brahman and not on some symbol of Brahman. Worship of some symbol of Brahman is the worship of Brahman in a secondary way only (*pratikeshu-dhyeyeshu brahmano gunatvāt na brahma dhyayitvan—Ratnaprabhā*, 4.3.15), so it cannot lead one to Brahman (*brahmadhyāyina eva brahma gamtārah, Ibid.*). Though good, symbolic worship is much less in value than the worship and meditation of Brahman. *Upāsanā* is twofold: (i) meditation on Him and communion with Him as the other and (ii) meditation on Him as the self—as not different from the meditator. The worshipper of God must identify himself with God, must participate in Divine life and must be so filled with the thought of God that he takes on Godliness—becomes God. Thus the first type of *upāsanā* leads to the second. In this state he must not meditate upon God as someone, other than himself, but as his very essence—as himself. When this reaches its culmination, there is no more any question of meditation, for the distinction of meditation and the meditated vanishes. One enters into Brahmanhood or rather one realizes oneself to be Brahman. As Vidyārayan has said, he who knows the self as Brahman cannot meditate upon It, for he experiences himself to be Brahman. For instance, a man cannot meditate upon himself as a human being, for he directly and indubitably experiences himself to be human. He who knows Brahman as the self cannot meditate, while he who does not realize this truth can meditate and he is not yet fully enlightened.[34]

In the final stage there is nothing that can be appropriately called God, for God presupposes creatures. As the creatures have vanished inasmuch as creatureliness is now seen to be an illusion, creatorship also vanishes.[35] There abides only the consciousness of self (*ātmānubhūti*). He who has reached that state would never hate any being, would be loving and compassionate to all and would always be happy ("*adveshtā sarva bhūtānam maitrah karuna eva cha.....santushtah satatam*"—*Gita* 12.13.ff). This conduct of his is derived from his

[33] *Sūtrabhāṣya*, 1.1.12; 4.3.15–16.

[34] *Vivaranaprameyasangraha*, p. 327.

[35] *Gītabhāṣya*, 12.12.

condition—the *Brāhmic sthiti*—in which he no more retains his ego (*ahamkāra*) and selfishenss, because he finds himself to be non-different from anything and is unable to entertain any ideas of ' mine and myself ' (*Gita*, 2.55–72). This is the highest kind of religious life but few, very few, enter into it. Yet it is the end of all.[36]

II

One of the principal elements of religious life is emotional devotion to a personal God. Unless God is set over against the soul and the world there cannot be any theistic devotion (*bhakti*). The *Svetāsvatara Upanishad* and the *Bhagavad-Gita* have expounded the way of *bhakti*. Thus from very early times *bhakti* or love of God has been held to be an important factor in religious life. The *Pāncharātra Āgamas*, the *Nārāyanīya* portion of the *Mahābhārata* (*Śānti Parva*) and the *Bhāgavata* are the important scriptures of the *Bhakti* School devoted to Vishnu. Of these the *Bhāgavata* occupies a unique place. Theistic schools like that of Chaitanya and Vallabha reckon it to be as important as the Veda. The *Bhāgavata* is an ancient scripture which has been quoted by Rāmānuja, Abhivanagupta, Māthura (*Sānkhya* commentator), and Gaudapāda. It has been commented upon by such great scholars as Madhva, Vallabha, Chitsukha, Śrīdhara, Sudarsanasuri and others.[37] Hymns and prayers like *Govindāshtaka*, *Prabodhasudhākara*, etc., which are reputed to be Śankara's works, refer to the stories of *Bhāgavata* and quote the very words of the *Bhāgavata*. The *Bhāgavata* is one of the eighteen *Purānas*, but it excels the others, because it is more philosophical and spiritual. Further, it clearly sets forth the idea of God as active in history. The book opens with a conversation between Nārada and Vyāsa. Vyāsa has sought to know and has also realized Brahman, the eternal and timeless,[38] but still he is restless and dejected. He tells Nārada that though he has attained Brahman as described in the scriptures and as It is in Itself, he still feels an emptiness[39] (*neunata*) and asks why it is so. Nārada tells him that it is true that Vyāsa has studied and understood the Vedas. He has decerned the nature of righteousness and has expounded it in several of his works. But what is the use of all that? He has not been touched by the fervour of devotion towards God who has incarnated Himself in every age out of love for His devotees and to uphold righteousness. Vyāsa was no doubt a great sage, a great teacher, but he never adored the Lord, never sang His praises, much less propagated the way of devotion

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[36] *Gītabhāṣya*, 9.10; 18.50.

[37] *Bhāgavata* of Kalyan (Gīta Press, Gorakhpur, 1941).

[38] *Bhāgavata*, 1.5.4.

[39] *Ibid.*, 1.5.7.

(*bhakti mārga*). That was why he was feeling a void in him. He no doubt has realised the timeless Brahman. But what about the world in time? Has he realized the meaning of the cycles of creation and destruction which are going on? He must now realize that this world is an expression of the Divine, that it is the Divine in as much as its creation, sustenance and dissolution proceed from the Divine.[40] But he must remember that the Divine surpasses this world. The world is an act of God (*vibhoh cheshthitam*),[41] a progressive experience of the Great One (*mahānubhāvābhyudaya*).[42] Nārada exhorts Vyāsa to look upon the world as God's work (creation). The rise and fall of civilizations and nations, the cycles of creation and dissolution, are not meaningless and sporadic. They are the purposive unfolding of a Divine plan. History is the working out of God's purpose—the God who is kind and benevolent, the Lord of all beings and who in His indescribable goodness descends (*avatāra*) into the world: assumes various forms in every age, and allows His devotees to enter into a personal relationship with Him—as friend (*e.g.*, of Arjuna, Sudhāmā), guide (*e.g.*, of Dharmarāja, Ugrasena), husband (*e.g.*, of Rādha, Rukmini), lover (*e.g.*, of the Gopikas), teacher (*e.g.*, of Arjuna, Uddhava) and deity (*e.g.*, Akrūra, Srutadéva and the sages). God incarnated Himself thus in every age (*yuga*). He actually lived and moved among His disciples. It is such a God, a God who loves and shows His grace to His devotees, that creates, sustains and devours this universe in meaningful sport (*amogha līlā*).[43] Thus through the temporal events God expresses Himself. He it is who makes history. In other words the world-process is a vehicle of God's purpose. That does not mean He has any end of His to serve, for He is eternally self-fulfilled (*āpta kāma*). Nārada advises Vyāsa to see in the universe and in the rise and fall of dynasties, God's hand, and be filled with devotion towards Him and adore Him by praising and singing His glory and the wonderful deeds of His incarnations like Rāma and Krishna, etc.[44] There can be no higher thing in life—whether austerity, sacrifice, charity, knowledge or scriptural study—than that of the worship of the Lord. This in short is the message of the *Bhāgavata* and other *Purānas* which describe the rise and fall of dynasties, the beginning and end of world epochs and æons, all the time showing how God directed all this process (*visva prakrita*) and how at significant times He actually came down, was born and lived among his creatures.

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[40] *Bhāgavata*, 1.5.20.

[41] *Ibid.*, 1.5.13 and 16.

[42] *Ibid.*, 1.5.21.

[43] *Ibid.*, 1.3.36.

[44] *Ibid.*, 1.5.8–22.

The Purānas are accepted as authoritative by the Hindus. So great an authority as Kumārila accepts their authority though he says that their stories are to be taken allegorically (*Tantravārtika*). In addition there is the *Gita*—the authority of which no *Vedāntin* can deny. And in the *Gīta* theism and the way of devotion are clearly expounded. How is the *Advaita vedānta* to be reconciled with *bhakti* and the conception of Incarnation? We have seen above how Śankara is forced to admit *bhakti* and faith as two other ways of reaching liberation in addition to meditation. While commenting on the scriptures, more especially the *Gīta*, he is confronted with this word *bhakti*, but always he tends to assimilate to *jñāna*. The *Gīta* texts which say that *jñāna* is the highest type of *bhakti* and explain a *jñāni* as one who has the belief that 'God is all' (*Vāsudevah sarvam*) are effectively pressed into service by Śankara, and distinguishing between a lower and a higher *bhakti*, he identifies that latter with *jñāna nishta*. As for the incarnation (*avatāra*), Śankara says that while other individuals do not know that they are God, the *avatāra*, Krishna for instance, know himself to be God. This is the difference between the *avatāra* and the other individuals: the *avatāra* has unclouded knowledge—omniscience (*nirāvarana jñāna*), while others are parviscient and do not know their real nature. There is also another difference. The *avatāra* is not really born (*Ina tu paramārthato lokavat*—Śankara), *i.e.*, not transmigratory like the others; he only appears to be born through his *Yogamāya*. That does not mean that the *avatāra* is unreal, for the *avatāra* is God Himself. The limitations to which the *avatāra* seems to submit himself in assuming a mortal body are only apparent. Thus from the empirical standpoint the *avatāra* and the other individuals are not at all on *a par*, the former is divine even while leading a life on earth, while the others are limited selves subject to disease, death and transmigration. From the standpoint of absolute truth there is no transmigratory world and as such no descent of God into the world, or God Himself. He who has reached that stage is himself Krishna—God. It is erroneous to think that the incarnation is a phantom from the empirical standpoint. From the empirical standpoint the incarnation is God Himself. Śankara fully endorses that. As to how the omnipresent, omniscient God is able to assume the form of a particular person without undergoing even the slightest change, as to how Divinity can co-exist with a human form and as to how God manages to be omnipresent, creator and sustainer of the world, though he is specially present in a particular body and place, that is a divine mystery (*janma karma cha me divyam*). God is able to do that, because He is the Lord of *Yogamāya*—the mysterious power of His which is the cause of the world. In this sense alone the form of the *avatāra* is *called māyāvigraha*. But as soon as the empirical standpoint is discarded and as soon as the individual perceives himself

to be Brahman, the ideas of God, creator, creature, world and incarnation are automatically sublated (*bādhita*).

No later *Advaita* teacher has been able to give a more satisfactory conception of incarnation. But some later *Advaita* writers have made valiant efforts to reconcile *bhakti* and *advaita jñāna* in a more satisfactory way than that of Śankara. Among these Madhusūdana Sarasvati and Śrīdhara are important. As Madhusūdana is one of the greatest authorities on *Advaita*, his effort is specially noteworthy. Śrīdhara is the famous commentator on *Bhāgavata* and *Vishnupurāna*. He is a follower of *Advaita* and he interprets the *Bhāgavata* in that light, and it is curious that Chaitanya himself accepted this commentary as the best and most faithful. Another notable effort of the last century is that of Śivasarma, whose book *Vāsudevarasānanda* has not won the recognition and vogue it ought to, though its value has been recognized by such great scholars as Pandit Malaviya and Dr. Ganganatha Jha. We shall now analyse their efforts and see how far they have succeeded in reconciling *bhakti* with *Advaita*.

To understand this we must keep in mind the *Advaita* theory of perception. Perceptual cognition, according to the *Advaita* school, is the apposition of the object and the mind which has taken the form of the object. This theory is based on the assumption that if the perceptible object is entirely distinct from the percipient, there can be no knowledge. To imagine any kind of relationship other than that of non-difference between the two is also difficult, for what relates this relation to the subject and object? To suppose any such relationship would rob perception of its immediacy and place it on a level with inference. So in perception the percipient and the perceived object must be present in the same locus—in short they must become non-different though not exactly identical. In other words, the object has no reality other than that of the percipient.[46] When the mind comes in contact with the object through the senses, the mind goes out through the sense, reaches the object and becomes one with it either by pervading it (Vachaspati's school) or by taking on the same form as that of the object (Vivarana school). Since all objects (according to *Advaitins*) are consciousness appearing in diverse forms due to ignorance, when any particular object comes into contact with the mind and thereby with the consciousness underlying the mind, the consciousness in the form of the object comes to have no difference from the consciousness limited by the mind which has assumed the form of the object. Though formless and intangible, mind is able to assume the

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[45] *Vedānta Paribhāṣa*, 43.

[46] Sureśvara's view explained by Madhusūdana, *Bhaktirasāyana*, K. 22.

form of the object, in the same way in which light is able to manifest an object by pervading it and assuming its form.[47] Śankara gives another analogy. Melted copper has no form of its own, but assumes whatever form into which it is cast; even so mind has no definite form of itself, but takes on the form of the objects with which it comes into contact.[48] All perception need not be sense-generated, for perception means direct cognition and there is a direct cognition of pleasure and pain. This is possible because the knowledge of pleasure or pain is a mental mode and pleasure or pain is also a mental mode. Thus the two are in apposition and there arises a knowledge of pleasure or pain. There can be no direct cognition of past pleasure or pain because they are not the present state of mind and so cannot be in apposition with any present mental mode. The cognition of self is immediate, because it is always directly in contact with the mind, as the self is conditioned by it. The knowledge of Brahman is immediate, because Brahman is not different from oneself, and a direct cognition of Brahman is possible, because it is the same as the cognition of self; and the erroneous view of self is removed as in the case of the removal of the rope-snake illusion, by correct apprehension. As Vidyāranya has said, intuition of Brahman means a particular mode of the mind which has for its object Brahman.[49] For example, when I stand in a row of persons and somebody tells me that I am the tenth in the row, I directly apprehend myself as the tenth because the percipient and object of knowledge (the tenth man) are identical, and so the mental mode in the form of the object and the object (here the percipient) are in apposition. Similarly, when the Upanishad tells me that I am Brahman, there is an identity between the knower and what is to be known. So direct cognition of the self as Brahman arises. This is immediate knowledge, though not sensuous. *Upāsanā* is based upon this principle. The worshipper or the aspirant repeatedly and later in the advanced stage ceaselessly meditates upon the object of his worship and consequently his mind takes on the form of the object. When this mental state becomes fixed the worshipper is so full of the idea of the object that he becomes inseparable from what he worships. He, so to say, lives and moves in God and when he dies he attains *sāyujya* or union with God, but his personality is not lost, as such he does not become the creator (*Sūtrabhāṣya* 4.4.17–22).

The *Brahmasūtras* and the *Upanishads* recognise the value of *upāsanā* and the principle underlying it. Madhusūdana, Śrīdhara

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[47] *Taittiriyabhāṣya*, Brahmavalli Madhūsudana, *Bhaktirasāyana*, 1–21–23.

[48] *Vivaranaprameyasangraha*, p. 270.

[49] *Bhāgavata*, X, 47. 24, 27. Srīdhara says, *Sarvātmabhava—ekāntabhakti*

and Śivasarma apply this principle to *bhakti* also. Constant hearing of the glory of the Lord, his life as *avatāra* and his needs of mercy generate veneration towards Him and faith in Him. This faith in God and knowledge of His glory melt the heart (*druta chitta*) and rouse an intense emotion. Here what is meant by faith is the intense and zealous determination to adore and worship Him alone and no other. When one repeatedly meditates over the attributes of the Lord—such as His mercy, His power, His mysterious deeds, His infinite beauty, etc.—there arises love of Him which also makes one experience a peculiar happiness. When this mental state becomes steadfast and entirely concerned with God to the exclusion of everything else it is called *bhakti*.[50] Through *bhakti* God's presence is felt by the devotees. When *bhakti* is able to manifest the bliss of God's real presence it is called *jñāna*.[51] As Madhusūdana says, if with intense emotion the quickened mind is able to apprehend God, the eternal, the Lord, the self-complete and the blissful, what else is to be accomplished[52]? The Lord, who is of the nature of bliss, when apprehended by the mind by becoming its form, becomes a passion (an abiding state of mind, a fixed sentiment—*rasasthāyibhāva*).[53] To have *bhakti* of God is to attain God's form.[54] Hearing of the holy stories of God's life on earth (as *avatāra*), meditating on them, etc., cleanses the mind and makes it fit to see the profound truth. Thus *jñāna* is another way in which *bhakti* acts. *Jñāna* means the modification of the mind in the form of God and that happens naturally to one who has *bhakti*, because the mind of one who is constantly thinking of God is engrossed (merged) in God.[55] This is how Madhusūdana, Śrīdhara and Śivaśarma have tried to reconcile *jñāna* with *bhakti*. That this is not in conflict with Śankara's own view is evident when we compare what these thinkers have said with Śankara's own words in *Vivekachūdāmaṇi*, where he says that he who is solely and intensely meditating on the real becomes the real (*sati sakto naro yāti sadbhāvam*).[56] The mind constantly contemplating Brahman merges in Brahman (*i.e.*, takes the form of Brahman).[57]

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[50] *Vāsudevarasānanda*, p. 191.

[51] *Bhaktirasāyana*, 1.28.

[52] *Ibid.*, 1–10.

[53] Srīdhara's commentary, *Bhāgavata*, XI, 14, 26.

[54] Srīdhara on *Bhāgavata*, XI, 14, 26–27.

[55] *Vivekachūdāmaṇi*, 359.

[56] *Ibid.*, 360–62.

[57] In *Vivaranaprameyasangraha*, pp. 324–27, it is maintained that *dhyāna* (*upāsanā*) is based on imagination.

From the above it is clear that there is no difference between *upāsanā* and *bhakti*. The only possible distinction is that in *bhakti* there is a strong element of feeling, while in *upāsanā* imagination is the dominating element.[58] As the mind cannot remain steady on what is formless, Brahman is imagined with some form (*brahmano rūpa kalpana*) and then meditated upon. Depending upon the competency of the individual concerned, the forms imagined differ. By repeated meditation the mind is modified into the form of the object meditated upon. If the object is divine and spiritual, by repeated meditation the mind becomes divine and pure. A man who is repeatedly thinking good thoughts acquires a habitual disposition towards the thinking of such thoughts and by continued good thought is able to transform himself into a good man. As the saying goes, " the soul is form and doth the body make". Continued thought and behaviour in tune with that thought transforms the whole personality. As he who always thinks good thoughts becomes good, he who always thinks of God becomes God. Insistent effort [*asakrit āvritti* as the *Brahma sūtra* (4.1.11) says] creates a disposition towards the object of interest—God, and in time the greater the intensity of meditation the greater is the degree of the divinization of the disposition. As *upāsanā* or *bhakti* develops, the identification between the worshipper and the worshipped increases. The degree to which this identification can go is illustrated by the life of Gopikas described in the *Bhāgavata* and by Chaitanya. Transcending the antithesis of subject and object in the intense feeling of loving adoration, the devotee becomes one with God. Similarly, in *upāsanā* meditation is carried on to such a pitch that imagination is quickened and the meditator not only sees the object meditated upon but becomes it, because according to *Advaita* perception takes place when the percipient and the perceived become non-different. This process of identification is quickened if the devotee or the worshipper is aware of his essential unity with God from the start. As the *Upanishads* have said the highest form of worship is to worship the deity as self. " I who have surrendered myself to Krishna am in fact not different from him," thus should one worship—says Śivaśarma.[59] Starting with the idea " I am of God only", " God alone is mine", one should ceaselessly meditate on this excluding all other thoughts from mind and when this notion is firmly implanted, one should meditate thus: " I am God, the infinite and immutable." By this constant meditation the idea is realised and gradually the distinction between the worshipper and the worshipped vanishes.[60] (Personality is not lost in *sāyujya*.)

[58] *Vasudevarasānanda*, p. 241.
[59] *Loc. cit.*, p. 244.
[60] *Sūtrabhāṣya*, 4–1–1.

There is difference between this method and the *jñāna mārga* of Śankara. The difference is this: while in *bhakti* and *upāsanā* feeling and imagination play a dominant role, in *jñāna* reason plays that part. But there is also some similarity. Śankara himself admits that *upāsanā* and *nididhyāsana* denote the same mental act which consists in repeated meditation.[61] The *Upanishads* use *upāsanā* and *vidyā* in the same sense.[62] The *Upanishad* declares "Thou art That." The clear-headed people who are keen enough to do so can certainly grasp its meaning even if they hear it once, but few indeed are of that type. The others who form the majority may have a vague and general idea as to what it means when they first hear it. By repeated meditation on it they are able to discard all apparent meanings and have the right understanding of it (*vākyārtha abhasa vyudasena samyak pratipadyamānah*). First of all the two categories "that" and "Thou" must be known without any shadow of ignorance, doubt and wrong notion. To achieve that one should study and deliberate over the scripture (*sāstrayuktyabhyāsah*); with the aid of scripture and reasoning it must be realised that the 'Thou' is not the body, mind and senses and that the self is untouched by pain and pleasure, etc. For they do not condition the self in the sleeping state and if they belong to its essence, the self could not have remained without them even in the sleeping state.[62] Thus by reasoning based on scripture one should firmly develop the idea that the self is Brahman, pure, eternal consciousness. When all doubts and contrary notions are at an end, there arises Brahman experience, *i.e.*, the mental mode which results in the intuition of Brahman.[63] Thus rational inquiry about Brahman—*Brahma vichāra*—constantly practised is called *abhyāsa* or *avritti*, and this results in the intuition of Brahman. The one point to be remembered is that the inquiry should be founded on scripture. It is to be noticed that even in this method of pure *jñāna mārga* there is need for meditation, but the object of meditation is not an object different from the self even from the start and the meditation consists in the discussion and deliberation of Upanishadic texts. As Madhusūdana Saraswati has clearly stated, Śankara thinks that this method is in no need of being supplemented by any of the other methods—*bhakti*, *upāsanā* or *Yoga*. He is also of the opinion that this method alone results in immediate liberation (*sadyomukti*) even while living (*jivan mukta*), while the other methods, those of *bhakti* and *upāsanā*, also lead the individual to liberation no doubt, but would not obliterate his individuality, for he would still retain his personality

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[61] *Loc. cit.* Also see Note 45 and 47 above.

[62] *Bhāṣya*, 3-4-2.

[63] See Note 57 above.

(*manas-lingadeha*) even when united with God. He would in every way be similar to God except in being the creator (*bhogamātra sāmyaingāt-jagadvyāpāravarjam*) and people who have attained this state never again transmigrate. At the end of the æon when the world is dissolved and there is no more any God standing over against the world, God as well as the liberated souls who are united with him dissolve in Brahman.[64]

[64] *Sūtrabhāṣya*, 4–4–17; 4–4, 17–22; 4–3–10 *et seq*

BOOK REVIEWS

Ramana Maharshi and His Philosophy of Existence. By T. M. P. Mahadevan. (Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, South India). Pp. 191. Price Rs. 4·00.

The Maharshi was averse to putting down for posterity his teachings in writing. However, he was persuaded to write in forty pregnant Tamil verses the burden of his message for modern man. That collection is known as *Ulladu Naarpadu*. Each verse in it is packed with deep meaning, and needs to be carefully explained even to serious students not unfamiliar with Sri Ramana's philosophy. Dr. Mahadevan has done great service to those who do not know Tamil by rendering these verses into English, and also by providing in an appendix a transliteration in Roman script. Besides, the Professor has written elucidatory notes on each verse showing how the teachings of Sri Ramana are related to Upanishadic thought on the one hand and Western philosophy on the other. Commenting on the first verse, for instance, Dr. Mahadevan says:

> "Sri Ramana has taught us that the manifold universe has as its ground a multi-powered First Principle, and that the One Principle manifests itself as the name and form world. By *name* we mean all physical phenomena and by *form* all physical facts. If we equate the First Principle with God, physical entities with souls, and the collocation of physical facts with the material world, then we have the three well-known categories recognised, either explicitly or implicitly, in all the systems of thought. Sri Ramana refers to this in the present verse, and shows that from a higher standpoint these three principles or categories dissolve themselves into the non-dual reality." (p. 39)

Being himself a devotee of the Maharshi, the author has been able to interpret the mind of his Master with a rare combination of personal devotion, sympathetic insight and profound scholarship. The value of the book is enhanced by an introduction which gives an account of the life of the Maharshi. This book is commended as a helpful guide to understand the life and work of Ramana Maharshi and the extent of his influence on Hindu intellectuals.

Reflections on the Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi. By S. S. Cohen. (Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, South India), 1959. Pp. 180. Price Rs. 4·00.

This is a different approach to the Maharshi in that it is based on an anthology of select passages from a journal which the author had preserved of his conversations with Sri Ramana. He has since added his own comments to explain the meaning of these brief sayings which originally arose out of informal day-to-day observations made by the

Maharshi when he gave *darshan* to the people who assembled in the Ashram. This record by an earnest inquirer of the Maharshi is itself an illuminating commentary on the traditional *pedagogical* method in imparting religious instruction and also on the kind of questions which seem to give concern to modern seekers after religious truth. The selections are arranged under different headings, such as 'Life, Death and Rebirth', 'The World', 'God', 'The Self or Reality' to help easy reference.

The Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo in the Light of the Gospel. By Eva Ollson. (Christian Literature Society, Madras), 1959. Pp. 73. Price Rs. 2·50.

After giving a brief account of the life of Sri Aurobindo, the author goes on to provide a valuable summary of his teachings, indicating just where this modern Hindu thinker differs from the classical Hindu *darshanas* on the one hand and Western philosophies on the other. The author has the gift of dealing with this rather difficult task in a simple and direct manner. She makes it easy to understand the abstractions of Sri Aurobindo's doctrines which the great teacher's own disciples have not always succeeded in doing.

It is not sufficiently realized how radically the Sage of Pondicherry deviated from Hindu orthodoxy. Miss Ollson points out that this is particularly noticeable when one takes account of Sri Aurobindo's view of the Ultimate as *Purushottama*, the Supreme Person; his emphasis on creation as purposeful; and his claim that the evolutionary process is directed towards the salvation of the entire world of creation. Nevertheless, it is significant that despite this innovation in Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of Hindu fundamentals, the essential emphasis still is on the Upanishadic understanding of the nature of Reality as That which is experienced in mystic self-realization. So that Sri Aurobindo's system is rightly described as also Vedanta.

In the concluding chapter, the author discusses the relation of Sri Aurobindo's teachings to the affirmations of Christian faith, and indicates that while there are certain points of similarity, the difference persists in the emphasis that Christian faith places on the universality of sin, the uniqueness of the Incarnation and the redemption wrought on the Cross.

The Teaching of Sri Aurobindo. By M. P. Pandit. (Sri Aurobindo Study Circle, Madras), 1959. Pp. 75. Price Rs. 4·00.

The significance of the teaching of Sri Aurobindo for this age of Hindu renaissance is not fully recognized. It may be due in part to the difficult language in which it has been frequently expressed. Not all his disciples have succeeded in clarifying the abstractions of Aurobindo philosophy by their interpretation of their Master's teaching. This brief presentation of the basic principles of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga is however a successful attempt. It is written in simple and non-technical language and should serve as an excellent introduction. The value of this book also consists in the conscious effort made to

relate the teaching of Sri Aurobindo to the problems of the day, which is one more expression of the new urge in resurgent Hinduism to vindicate its relevancy to the contemporary needs of modern man.

Hinduism—Its Meaning for the Liberation of the Spirit. By Swami Nikhilananda. (George Allen & Unwin, London), 1959. Pp. 189. Price Rs. 13·00.

The author is a well-known member of the Ramakrishna Order and has written extensively on the Vedanta. In this volume, which is one of the World Perspectives Series, the Swami has ably interpreted the fundamentals of the Hindu faith in terms of Advaita Vedanta. The essential genius of Hinduism, the Swami points out, lies in the fact that it is not an arid system of metaphysical doctrines but essentially a way of life which seeks through ordered self-discipline to liberate the true self of man from attachment to transitory earthly being. The Swami's intention is to explain in simple and intelligible language to Western readers the profundities of the Vedanta in the light of this claim; and in this he is eminently successful. Of special significance are the chapters which deal with the Spirit of Hinduism, Hindu Ethics, Hinduism in Practice, and Inter-Religious Relations.

The following quotations taken from the book give an idea of the Swami's method of approach and interpretation. " Religion has always been the backbone of India", he states. "During the days of her national misfortune it was religion that saved Hindu Society from total disintegration. All through the period of her political decline, saints and mystics have urged her to give up vanity and pride, and cultivate love of man and devotion to God. India has listened to their advice and survived. In the history of the world she is perhaps the solitary instance of an ancient nation whose soul could not be destroyed by ruthless conquerors by force or persuasion while many younger nations have disappeared after a meteoric display of physical power and glory." One wonders whether this is a warning to Independent India that the ideal of the Secular State is a deviation from tradition for which Hindu nationalism will have to pay a heavy price.

Writing about the four *varnas* in Hindu society, the Swami observes: "The basis of the caste system according to the Hindu view is man's self-evident inborn inequality, physical, intellectual and spiritual. An individual is born in a higher or lower caste as a result of actions performed by him in his previous life and each person therefore is responsible for his position. It is a pity that, forgetting this inescapable fact which is cardinal to Hinduism, our 'reformers' insist on a casteless society trying to transplant un-Hindu ideas on the Hindu soil....If India gives up the caste system in principle and practice, she will surely lose her spiritual backbone." Nevertheless the Swami maintains that there is no room for the caste system in an industrial society, which is controlled by the power of wealth and labour. It is the goal of a secular classless society to create an equality on the level of the Sudras (industrial workers) whereas Indian society, through the caste system, has aimed at creating an equality by raising all to the level of Brahmins (creators of culture). Then in the last chapter, the Swami points out "

religion which regards ultimate reality as impersonal truth, and at the same time recognises the validity of its concrete manifestations for the benefit of struggling aspirants, cannot but admit the validity of all religious ideals and show them respect. The situation is quite different with those to whom the personal God is the ultimate reality". The author's concluding plea is that the "inner experience of all religions is the same everywhere, only the outer expressions are different as determined by time and place. The end and aim of all religions is the realisation of God, though the methods of realisation may differ".

Some very vital issues are raised by such interpretations of Hinduism intended for non-Hindu readers as this remarkable book. One question which needs to be answered is whether Hinduism and Advaita Vedanta are the same? If so, the varied forms of *sanatana dharma* should also be interpreted in terms of the Vedanta. The confusion for the non-Hindu becomes all the more bewildering when the message of Hinduism to the world is expressed in terms of an attitude to all religion rather than as a specific body of teaching or a distinguishable *corpus* of religious practice. This is further accentuated by the implication that Christianity can also be brought under the umbrella of Advaita Vedanta! The other question relates to the eager desire of modern exponents of Hinduism to make Hindu beliefs and practices relevant to the needs of the modern world and yet retain unchanged the original emphasis of the Upanishadic dogmas of Brahman-Atman and Karma-samsara. There is still need for more systematic and careful thought to relate this view of Ultimate Reality to contemporary understanding of personal values, community being, and world order. The future for the religions of mankind is beset with difficulties. But one thing seems inevitable. Just as we cannot prevent the eventual emergence of a one-world neighbourhood and the achievement of international understanding if humanity is to continue inhabiting this globe, we cannot stop the development of a creative relationship among the religions of the world. But this does not mean the dissolution of the religious heritage of the peoples of the world, whose diverse cultures have persisted these many centuries of history to endow them with a distinctiveness, in an insipid commonalty of colourless uniformity which is tantamount to religious indifference. It means rather the enriching of each other's faith in abiding Truth and essential Reality that results from creative and dynamic interaction of beliefs and practices. It is just here that the claims of Hinduism as *sanatana dharma* breaks down because of its past history.

A Century of Social Reform in India. By S. Natarajan. (Asia Publishing House.) Pp. 208. Price Rs. 10·50.

This is a graphic account of the history of social reform in India beginning with early 19th century when Hindu social ideals and institutions came to be laid in question by the human values and standards of social conduct which were characteristic of Western liberalism. The British rulers were cautious about interfering with Hindu social customs since most of them were closely bound up with religious notions. Beginning with such men as Ram Mohan Roy, however, Hindu leaders

themselves not only recognized the need for a re-examination of Hindu social institutions, but set about repatterning the very structure of society of which they formed part. With the rise of nationalism and the demand for independence, the pace of social reform is not only accelerated but its extent widened so as to include the whole outreach of human relations in the life of modern India. Liberal nationalists like Justice Ranade, at the beginning of this century, indicated that national progress involved a comprehensive programme of total reform which would include the political, social and economic structure of New India in the making. "You cannot have a good social system," he warned his countrymen, "when you find yourself low in the scale of political rights, nor can you be fit to exercise political rights and privileges unless your social system is based on reason and justice. You cannot have a good economic system when your social arrangements are imperfect. If your religious ideas are low and grovelling you cannot succeed in social, economic or political spheres. This interdependence is not an accident but is the law of our nature." Perhaps this is a lesson which has yet to be learnt by Independent India.

Mr. Natarajan indicates in this well-documented survey how this widening horizon places increasing emphasis on action, especially under the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi in more recent times. It is no longer piece-meal reform of particular aspects of national being but a total repatterning of the entire political and social structure which is now visualized. The interrelation between political progress and social reform which came to be realized in the period of the struggle for freedom has led, since Independence, to radical social legislation, the ideal of a socialistic pattern of society, and the acceptance of a Government which is steadily moving in the direction of a secular welfare state. The author also points out that the movement towards social reform has not always been one of easy advance, especially in a country where tradition has always tended to be conservative and where social *mores* have been closely interbound with religious orthodoxy. It is little wonder that the urge to social reform has necessitated the restatement of some of the basic beliefs and practices of Hinduism and towards this the work of Christian missions has made a significant contribution. To quote Mr. Natarajan, "The fear of Christianity has been the beginning of much social wisdom in India. The first impulse to start orphanages, for instance, came from the desire to prevent famine orphans from being swept into the missionary fold through mission orphanages." At the same time he grants that "Social service, as distinguished from social reform, is a new feature of Indian life, which we owe chiefly to the example of Christian missions."

The author himself inherits a rich tradition in this field of social action. He is the son of the distinguished Editor of the *Indian Social Reformer* who in his generation played a significant role in the history of social reform in India. Mr. Justice Gajendrajadkar has written an excellent foreword to the book, which in its original form was awarded the Dadabhai Naoroji Memorial Prize Fund in 1956.

Fundamentals of Hindu Faith and Culture. By Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar. [Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Private Ltd.], 1959. Pp. 160. Price Rs. 6·00.

The publishers of this volume, one of the oldest in South India to undertake the printing of books on religion and philosophy, could not have hit on a happier idea to honour Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar on his 80th birthday than by bringing out on the occasion this collection of essays and addresses. The topics dealt with cover a wide range, but every single one of them is treated with informed understanding, deep conviction and impartial objectivity. This is to be expected of such a brilliant intellect as that of Dr. C. P. Ramaswami. What may however be surprising to some is that with the passage of time he has also become more concerned with the profundities of Hindu religious thought and with elucidating its basic affirmations of faith. But to those who know that this scholar-statesman is also a descendant of one of the greatest Vaishnava theologians, Appaya Dikshitar, this aspect of Dr. Ramaswami's many-faceted person is by no means contradictory.

It would be invidious to single out from this collection what seem to be of greater appeal than the rest. Any such preference will only indicate the personal predilection of the reader. Writing on Conversion Dr. Ramaswami remarks, "Conversion therefore is perfectly legitimate provided it proceeds from fundamental convictions or, in the language of the Christian Fathers on 'change of heart'.....To jettison a faith that has been ours and to take up another faith is a serious responsibility, not a responsibility that we should shirk if a real call comes, but certainly not one lightly to be embarked upon." Or again, in the essay on the Renaissance on India he observes, "It ought to be possible for our country to rise to the occasion to realize the perils of a separatist policy and undertake the task of unification by social adjustments, by revolving the excrescense of social injustice....And I believe myself that unless a sense of true religion is reborn and revitalised, as Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda endeavoured to encourage, we shall not solve the problems of our stability; because mental, moral and psychological stability is not born of formal or political propositions or syllogisms. It is born of faith in something, and of convictions and aspirations towards a lofty ideal."

A REASSESSMENT OF CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER WITH ISLAM*

A Review Article

By Rev. J. B. Carman

The Rev. W. A. Bijlefeld's recently-published doctoral dissertation, *De Islam als Na-Christelijke Religie* (Islam as a Post-Christian Religion), deserves attention far outside the Netherlands and should be made available for a much wider circle of readers than those who can read it in the original Dutch. The six-page summary in English gives some idea of the subjects discussed and the conclusions reached, but it cannot indicate the scholarly thoroughness, the careful reasoning, and the eagerness for a real meeting with Muslims, which characterize this book.

Dr. Bijlefeld maintains that Islam came into existence in a dialogue with Judaism and Christianity and may therefore be characterized as a "post-Christian" religion. Most Christian interpreters of Islam have recognized this important fact, but they have evaluated its significance in two almost opposite ways. Dr. Bijlefeld discusses these two views at length under the headings "The Radical Rejection of Islam" and "The Positive Evaluation of Islam as a Religion", and he gives examples of each view from the past history of Islamic-Christian relations, and more particularly from the period since 1900. Under the first heading come views such as that "Islam is from the Devil and not from God" and that a demonic power was and is active in Islam. The holders of such views usually maintain that Islam deliberately and consciously rejected the Christian Gospel, rather than misunderstanding it because of a defective witness by the Christian Church of Muhammed's time. Sometimes they also hold that Allah is not "the God and Father of Jesus Christ". On the other hand, a number of Christian thinkers throughout the centuries have made a "positive" evaluation of Islam. They assume that "Islam and Christianity deal with one and the same God", although the knowledge of God in Islam is regarded as more or less seriously defective and in need of correction by the Biblical message. Some writers have even regarded Islam as a "Christian sect". This view is particularly held by contemporary Roman Catholic scholars, most of whom expressly state that "it is the same God whom Christians and Muslims—each in their own way—confess and seek to serve". Dr. Cragg is a leading non-Roman Catholic exponent of this view—he insists that "One and the same God over all was the reality in both" religions, but also emphasizes that we must give very serious consideration to the very deep differences in the knowledge of God between Islam and Christianity.

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* *Islam as a Post-Christian Religion, an Inquiry into the theological Evaluation of Islam, mainly in the Twentieth Century* (with a summary in English). By W. A. Bijilefeld. (Published by van Keulen, N. V., The Hague, The Netherlands), 1959, Pp. xii + 352.

Dr. Bijlefeld does not believe that it is possible to accept either of these positions. On the one hand, the "post-Christian" nature of Islam should not be taken to mean that Islam is "anti-Christian"—a deliberate rejection of the Gospel by Muhammed and his followers. We do not know in what form the Christian message reached Muhammed, nor to what extent it was "mutilated or distorted". It is therefore impossible to decide to what extent Jews and Christians failed to communicate the Biblical message and to what extent Muhammed refused to accept this message. On the other hand, Dr. Bijlefeld is equally unwilling to accept the opposite position, that Islam is "semi-Christian". The same terms often have a quite different meaning in the Bible and the *Quran*. Moreover, the Almighty God in whom Muslims believe cannot simply be identified with God, the Father. Omnipotence is not the specific attribute of the First Person of the Trinity, nor can God's omnipotence be understood by the Christian without reference to the Cross.

What Dr. Bijlefeld urges is a *suspension or postponement of judgment* about Islam's claims to Divine revelation, which means that we admit that—

> At the present time we have no way of knowing whether Islam has consciously repudiated or unintentionally misconceived the Biblical Message; whether it has been scandalized by the Cross or by a caricature of Christianity.

Along with this basic attitude of suspending or indefinitely postponing judgment come certain *negative judgments*, for we cannot then accept certain frequent Christian judgments about Islam. We must stop talking about "Satanic influence" in Islam, or of the Muslim's deliberate rejection of the Gospel. However, we must also refuse to (1) draw up a list of "common elements" in Christianity and Islam, (2) acknowledge that "Muslims and Christians worship the same God, who transcends our different theological conceptions", (3) take the references in the Bible to Ishmael as proof of the Divine mission of Muhammed to the Arabs, or (4) admit a "preparation for the Gospel" in Islam simply because it has recognized and accepted Musa and 'Isa as prophets.

This suspension of theological judgment is not simply a negative refusal to come to any decision. It is based on the understanding of Islam as a "post-Christian" religion. This implies:—

(1) the acceptance of the historical fact that parts of the Biblical revelation—even if in a very much "disguised form"—have influenced Islam in its beginning; and

(2) taking seriously the conviction which was proclaimed by Muhammed and helped to determine the essential nature of Islam: that the Books of Revelation granted to Jews and Christians (at least in their original form) convey the same message as the *Quran*: they testify to the One God, who,

after sending Musa, 'Isa and the other prophets, has also sent Muhammed.

Even the refusal to come down on one side or the other in the debate on the Christian assessment of Islam has a very positive practical consequence. After trying to show that neither in the case of Muhammed nor in that of any subsequent generation has there been a real confrontation with the Biblical message, Dr. Bijlefeld concludes, "The actual confrontation of Islam with the Kerygma is still a matter for the future". Whether this confrontation will take place depends in part on the attitude of Christians. Only through such a real confrontation will Islam "come to fulfilment" (*i.e.*, accept fully the Gospel whose message it claims to acknowledge and some of whose elements it seems to contain) or, by rejecting the Gospel after having thoroughly understood it, "become a radically anti-Christian religion".

It is therefore not surprising that the concluding chapter is devoted to some practical suggestions for bringing about such a "real confrontation with Islam". There must be much more real *meeting* between Muslims and Christians, not in the first place as adherents of rival systems, but as *men*, who have common interests, common projects of work, and common aims. Out of the understanding which comes from living and working together, an effort to understand one another's faith becomes possible. Although much can be done in the "natural" meeting of Muslims and Christians in daily life, there is a need for special "centres" where those of both religions can come to know one other. The "International Summer Course" of the Benedictine Abbey in Toumiline, Morocco, is an outstanding example of this kind of meeting. Establishing such acquaintance and friendship is a necessary condition for taking "steps towards undoing the deep-rooted alienation between Muslims and Christians".

If this confrontation is to lead to real communication of the Gospel to Muslims, there is another extremely important condition: the existence, not simply of a few witnessing individuals, but of a Christian fellowship. This means that the building of the Church among the *non-Muslim people* in the midst of whom Muslims live is an essential part of the communication of the Gospel. (Dr. Bijlefeld is thinking primarily of Central and West Africa, but the argument would apply to India as well.) Moreover, the effectiveness of this witness depends upon the existence of real fellowship between different Churches and denominations. Where the Christian converts from African tribal religions (and the same would apply to Christians of Hindu background in India) are divided into different sects and are not obviously united in *one fellowship*, such a divided Church bears very little witness to the Muslims.

The Church must realize that this communication must be with *Muslims*. Too often in the past there have been apologetics and argumentation directed against "Islam", which neglected the concrete situation of those who lived within the fellowship of this religion. This does not mean that we should ignore Islam "as a system and a creed", but it does mean that we must constantly keep in mind "how the particular Muslims whom we meet confess and experience their religion,

to what extent they are determined by influences outside Islam, with what problems they are occupied, and with what anxieties they are beset". The author points to the *Operation Reach* of the Near East Christian Council as the best planned attempt in the whole history of Muslim evangelism to equip and prepare a wide range of Christians for communication with Muslims.

In the meeting with Islam, the most essential questions of faith must eventually be considered. We must confess our faith, but we should do so in terms that can be understood. We cannot respond to Cragg's "Call to Interpretation" unless we enter sympathetically into the lives of Muslims. It is only on the basis of such "comprehensive participation" in Muslim life that we can properly reformulate our proclamation of the Gospel. For that very reason, Dr. Bijlefeld says, he has not tried in this book to indicate what such a new interpretation should contain, for he has not yet himself been involved in such a concrete meeting with Muslims, or more precisely, he has not yet participated in the Church's encounter with Muslims in the midst of a Muslim environment. (Since this dissertation was completed, the author has gone to join in such an encounter in Nigeria.)

Practical circumstances no doubt compel Christians in some situations to decide on the truth of the Muslim claim to Divine revelation. For example, the Christians in Indonesia have to decide whether it is right to enter into a common "religious front" with Muslims against the forces of secularism and Communism. In general, however, it is better to avoid such theological judgments. The author believes, for example, that he must reject the theological basis of the *Continuing Committee on Muslim-Christian Co-operation*, which is: "We both believe in the one God".

> We do not at all wish to maintain that Allah and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ are *not* the same one true God; we are only trying to take seriously the fact that it is theologically illegitimate—for both Christians and Muslims—to speak about God except on the basis of His speaking to us. We only know God in the relation in which He has made Himself known to us ....Now it is clear that for a Muslim obedient listening to the *Quran* implies that he accepts the proposition that the God of Abraham, Moses and Jesus is the God of Jews and Christians, who has flawlessly revealed His word of revelation to Muhammed. Christians, however, can do nothing else than to try to understand where and to what extent the *Quran's* testimony to God agrees or differs with the knowledge of God which has been granted them through the Biblical revelation.

An acceptable common basis for discussion between Christians and Muslims is what they have in common as religions, the fact that they have a similar structure as "theocentric and historical religions of revelation". (This applies also to Judaism.)

> They are all linked by the conviction that life, in small things and in large, should be ordered in obedience and service to God; they are all linked by the certainty that God is busy in our history

accomplishing His plans, and they all live from the faith that our speaking of God is based on and proceeds from God's speaking to us in His revelation.

Of course all these words must be "filled" with content, and naturally it will then become plain that often different contents, meanings, or functions are ascribed to the same concept. This is therefore not intended as a common confession of faith, but as a formal starting point.

It is from this point that we shall both have to proceed, not only to understand one another, but also to find in this encounter the forms in which the proclamation that we (or they) have heard ourselves can be passed on to others. Eventually the Muslim will ask us to accept God's revelation so consistently that we become Muslims. And we as Christians, in this meeting and out of this experience, shall seek words to preach the Gospel.

The Church of Jesus Christ is called in the world of Islam to a communication with Muslims and to a confrontation with Islam. This means that it is summoned to understanding, translation, and interpretation; to *diakonia* and *koinonia*; to answer and proclamation; to dialogue and witness. It is called to all this in order that that Muslims may come to a real decision concerning Him, who has been appointed for the downfall and the rising of many.

Cragg ends his book, *The Call of the Minaret*, with a chapter entitled, "The Call to Patience". It is well to give very serious heed to that call. But at the same time, we know that even this patience is nothing else than what Dr. Hoekendijk has called, *Disciplined Impatience*.

[This is an abbreviated version of the first instalment of a review published in *The Bulletin of the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies*, Series LVIII, No. 2, April-June 1960. *J.B.C.*]

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NUMBER

PROF. SHASHI BHUSAN DASGUPTA, M.A., PH.D., is Ramtanu Lahiri Professor of Bengali Language and Literature and Head of the Department of Modern Indian Languages, University of Calcutta, Calcutta.

SRI. S. MOOKERJEE, M.A., B.SC., B.T., is Lecturer, Nagpur Mahavidyalaya, Nagpur.

DR. K. SATCHIDANANDA MURTY, is the Head of the Department of Philosophy of the Andhra University, Waltair.

THE REV. DR. R. PANIKKAR, is a Member of the Institute of Philosophy of the Higher Council of Scientific Research, University of Madrid, Spain, and is now engaged in research in Indian Philosophy at the Banaras Hindu University.

PROF. P. SANKARANARAYANAN, M.A., is Professor of Philosophy, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.

PROF. M. YAMUNACHARYA, M.A., is Retired Professor of Philosophy, University of Mysore, and Editor of the *Quarterly of the Fellowship of the Friends of Truth.*

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